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MATA HARI

Courtesan and Spy

By

MAJOR THOMAS COULSON, O.B.E.

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SAN RAFAEL, CALIFORNIA

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MATA HARI

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Preface

THE ROMANTIC ADVENTURES OF MATA HARI stirred a certain section of public opinion to a sympathy rarely accorded to spies. The men and women of that profession are usually the object of general execration from their enemies and a somewhat furtive admiration from others who extract pleasure or consolation from the pursuit of danger, where the degree and not the motive is the standard. Why, then, should this vaudeville "star" have excited a contrary emotion? Why should she have as defenders: princes, statesmen, savants, and artists, as well as genial *boulevardiers* who, if lacking in a supersensitive morality, are without doubt loyal citizens of the nation to which Mata Hari did incalculable harm?

In the first place, Mata Hari was a woman of unusual beauty, moving within a veil of sensual mysticism; in the second place, her chosen forum was Paris. The attention she had drawn as an artist and her subtle personality account for much of the interest she aroused. The fact that a Frenchman is never too fat, too old, or too ugly to be interested in a pretty (and frail) woman supplies the remainder of the answer to the problem. The average woman spy, outside of the popular romances, is not a lovable creature. But, endowed with a romantic nature, a rich imagination, a flair for the sensational, the sentimental, and the poetic, preaching a gospel of love which had to be communicated in whispered confidences, has this woman not all the characteristics of an ideal heroine for a successful novel?

Since the life and death of Mata Hari have become the common property of writers for the stage and more particularly for the screen, her fascinating history as a super-spy, dancer, courtesan, and high-priestess of a lascivious love cult with its wealth of drama, romance, and bitter tragedy, has been submerged beneath a torrent of highly imaginative literature which almost completely obscures the truth. No spy story is too absurd to be associated with her name; no deep-rooted intrigue too treacherous but that it becomes the more sinister by being made to revolve about her person. For the most part these flights of the artistic imagination bear too unmistakably the stamp of their manufacture to be worth exposing, but others, more subtly constructed, have passed into the current coin of espionage legend without any better claim to authenticity. The life of Mata Hari is romantic enough to require no embellishment, so that in the following narrative imagination plays no part in the drama it unfolds. No effort has been made to invent situations or conversations to promote the easy flow of the story.

Certain phases of Mata Hari's life are inexplicable to those unaccustomed to the methods and practices of the secret services, and for this reason I have tried to illustrate the story with examples of other spies' experiences. This knowledge of the German espionage work was collected while a regimental intelligence officer in Ireland, England, and France. The quoted examples of other spies are stories told me, for the most part, by men who were actually engaged in the work of counter-espionage which revealed their activities. It has been suggested that the narrative would be more convincing if the names of certain actors in the sensational story had appeared in the text. This could only have been done if the great game had terminated with the other hostilities on November 11, 1918. Unfortunately, that is not so. The scenes change, the task varies, but the work goes on. Reticence on certain points became not merely a matter of discretion, but of life and death to some

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of the men still engaged in the work of counter-espionage.

For instance, allusion is made in the text to a Russian courier who carried a draft treaty in the barrel of his fountain pen. I have been asked who was the courier and what treaty did he carry. To reveal these details would most certainly lead to the imprisonment, possibly the death, of a man who is still actively engaged in this dangerous work. It might be urged that the mere mention of the extraordinary hiding-place is evidence enough to betray the main characters. Happily it is not. But danger lies in the explanation. For purely diplomatic reasons other details may not yet be revealed, as will be understood from a reading of the text; too many trusted and influential people are involved. It is a great gulf that separates the foyers of the elegant Champs-Élysées from the bivouac fires; the vicious luxury of the *demi-monde,* sipping its cocktail with nice enjoyment, from the beer-swigging soldiers in the canteens; the lascivious dances of the worship of Siva from the grim Dance of Death on the crumbling parapets, where riven bodies were a commonplace. Yet over this yawning gulf between selfish lust and heroic self-sacrifice went the fluttering feet of the

Red Dancer and her partner, Death, and the injury she did was tragic enough without adding to it by exposing people who, through accident or indiscretion, became involved.

T. C.

Mata Hari

COURTESAN AND SPY

Chapter One

THE FIRST TIME I HEARD THE NAME OF MATA HARI was in the fall of 1916. The association of her name with the inexplicable leakage of highly confidential information will best reveal how the woman's sinister activities reacted upon men far removed from her physical existence. It will help to show why a spy incurs such deadly hatred among men not disinclined to face death when the danger may be boldly grasped, but who shudder with apprehension when some nameless and invisible enemy tries to encompass their destruction under the veil of assumed friendship which promotes an attitude of indifference among those whose duty it is to guard against such concealed activity.

Picture, then, a group of English soldiers straining their eyes into the abyss of night, waiting for the firing of a Verey light which will illumine a phenomenon just come within their knowledge. A patrol has just returned with the information that something mysterious has appeared in No Man's Land that demands investigation. Scarcity of numbers in this sector had made increased watchfulness imperative and there was not a man among them who did not know No Man's Land as intimately as he knew the details of his own back yard. But night plays fantastic tricks with the imagination and the eyes, so that when this newly returned patrol made its report there was no little uneasiness about the mysterious object set before their trench. Complete investigation, however, proved that this was no more than a crude notice-board bearing the scrawled enquiry, "Why wait for the 29th?"

Thus it came about that the bursting indiscretion of a mischievous Saxon soldier undid the work of a cunning spy. But we, who were the victims of the joke, were completely bewildered by this singular message which had come out of the night. Nor could our staff offer any enlightenment when we applied to them for an explanation. They were too busy with statistical computations of the consumption of plum and apple jam to gratify the misplaced curiosity of an enemy whose sense of humour usually had a more *macabre* touch. The incident would have been overlooked among more pressing anxieties and a tragedy would have resulted but for a chance visit the following day to some men who were training in the strictest seclusion for a special minor offensive.

These men were of my own company and at my suggestion were being trained for a night raid in full daylight. Night training is usually rendered farcical by the impossibility of adequate supervision, but with darkness simulated by the use of dark glasses we hoped to achieve a greater degree of efficiency. The work of these men was conducted in the utmost secrecy. No one other than about six officers had any idea of either the purpose, the locale, or the time of the raid. Living in such isolation, the raiders were always delighted to receive their rare visitors and listened with delight to the most trifling details of our battalion activities. As most people whose lives are anything but a joke are usually entertained by the feeblest jests, I was tempted to tell them of the enemy's enigmatic enquiry, "Why wait for the 29th?"

The recital of this incident caused as much consternation as would have arisen in paradise had the devil dropped in for a social visit. Except, of course, for the blasphemy; that was supplemental, presumably. It appeared that the 29th was the date chosen for the secret raid and that our sector was to be the scene of the outburst. It was then the 26th. In spite of this unexpected betrayal after such elaborate precautions to maintain secrecy, the raid was carried out according to program in all its details except for the date. On the night of the 27th these men crept quietly out of the trenches, over No Man's Land, and fell on an enemy taken completely by surprise. It would have been an unqualified success but for the unfortunate death of the young officer in command. On the return from the raid he was shot in the thigh and I was carrying him back to our trenches, when a bullet whipped through the night, penetrated his throat, and embedded itself in my shoulder. Just at the moment this happened he was about to tell me some secret of his last leave in Paris and his lips had just framed the words, "If we could only find that damned dancer . . ." when they were closed by the great silence and his eyes turned to that dawn which knows no eventide.

During a convalescence spent in France, I investigated the circumstances of young Hogg's last leave and its association with a dancer, never for one moment imagining that it would lead to a definite result, since dancers are as numerous as thieves in the City of Light. What I did discover had no meaning at the time, but its significance was too great to be forgotten.

In order to obtain the dark glasses which I had recommended for the training of his men, Hogg and a companion had gone to Paris as being the only place within reach likely to furnish this extraordinary need. The pair of youngsters had little or no knowledge of the city and their ignorance of the language made the simplest purchase as laborious as a complicated commercial transaction. They, therefore, addressed themselves to any chance acquaintance for information concerning spectacle-makers, but, thanks to the direction of their enquiries, their request was received as something of a pleasantry by everyone whom they encountered. Their mission was soon being passed from one malicious little tongue to another along café terraces until their appearance was hailed with delight in the more popular rendezvous. At last when they were becoming desperate, and therefore more amusing, one amiable lady volunteered her assistance. After a brief interview Hogg consented to accompany her on the quest for dark glasses. There were, I found, certain hectic celebrations attending the successful execution of the commission on which neither of the young officers retained clear recollections—when the stomach is full the head is empty. They returned to their posts satisfied that the amiable and kind lady would collect and forward the required glasses as soon as they were ready.

It was possible, at a later date, and with more evidence available, to ascertain how the terrible Mata Hari did her work. In order to learn where and when this raid was to take place she had to delay the dispatch of the dark glasses until after the two young officers had finished their short leave, and to accept the responsibility of forwarding them when they were delivered by the optician who had undertaken to secure them. For this reason she was furnished with the correct address of the unit to which they were to be sent, and the enemy was thus able to identify the locale of the raid. The correct date she ascertained by feigning a great interest in the exploit and a desire to read of its successful accomplishment in the communiqué issued the following day. Those of us who were amazed at her ability to obtain such confidential information ceased to wonder at Mata Hari's skill in this case when we became familiar with her major activities exercised against more capable protagonists than two young subalterns.

The words spoken in the presentiment of death are often prophetic. Months later, when Mata Hari was under trial for espionage, the writer heard her spoken of as the "Red Dancer," and the mystery of "Why wait for the 29th?" became a fragment of an infinitely greater quest which led to the revelation of the entire life of the woman who was registered in the German secret service as H21 and who sent thousands like this young colleague to their death.

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Chapter Two

THIS IS THE REVERSE OF THE MEDAL. WHAT OF its obverse? The story of the spy H21 is incomprehensible without a knowledge of the "Red Dancer." Unless one understands the extraordinary power of fascination she exercised it is not possible to believe that she could reduce the Second Bureau, the nerve centre of the French army, to temporary impotence; could correspond with her espionage chief on paper that bore the heading of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; could have conducted an intimate intrigue with the head of the War Department; and when an outraged army finally brought her to trial and condemnation, could yet invoke the aid of princes, ambassadors, and scholars. It is only by a knowledge of what she called her artistic life that one can realize the nature and extent of her fatal sorcery. It explains, too, why a band of enthusiastic pseudo-intellectuals are still endeavouring to invest her with an aureole of martyrdom, for she claimed the attributes of a high-priestess of an ancient but little-known religion, and her adorers are willing to place her in that office within their own degenerate cult.

Not all her believers are to be classed in this coterie. There still lingers a select band of irreconcilables who steadfastly maintain that Mata Hari's claims to be a *bayadère* were perfectly genuine. One still meets in the Parisian haunts of the pseudo-intellectuals an occasional visitor who whispers that on a recent visit to a remote *schloss* in a secluded part of Austria he was privileged to attend a repetition of one of these religious ceremonies dedicated to the god Siva and presided over by Mata Hari. His words fall on believing ears and there are murmurs of regret that France should have been the chosen instrument for inflicting punishment upon this faithful disciple.

In order to realize how she accomplished these astonishing feats one has to have a picture of her in one of her favourite séances, not a vaudeville appearance this time (for her public appearances were only gestures to the mob of unbelievers), but the type of occasion from which she extracted most enjoyment and most wealth, and which was the foundation of her amazing power over men of position and influence. It is such a scene as might be witnessed in the intimacy of the elegant palaces of, say, the Prince Drago, the Princess Murat, or the Duchess of Eckmühl. In the voluptuous abandon of the semi-privacy, before a group of selected guests, reclining in luxurious ease after copious sacramental libations and surrounded by her worshippers, Mata Hari invokes the image of her youth.

"I was born," she says in a soft, languorous tone which the listeners immediately associated with the mysterious East, "in the south of India on the coast of Malabar, in the holy city of Jaffnapatam, the child of a family within the sacred caste of Brahma. By reason of his piety and pureness of heart my father was called *Assirvadam,* which means 'The Blessing of God.' My mother was a glorious *bayadère* [1] in the temple of Kanda Swany. She died when she was fourteen, on the same day I was born. The priests of the temple, having cremated my mother, adopted me under the baptismal name of Mata Hari, which means 'Eye of the Dawn.' From the time when I took my first uncertain steps I was shut up in the great subterranean hall of the pagoda of Siva, where I was to be trained to follow in my mother's footsteps through the holy rites of the dance. Of these early years my mind retains only vague recollections of a monotonous existence in which, during the long morning hours, I was taught to imitate automatically the movements of the *bayadères,* and in the afternoons was allowed to walk in the gardens while weaving garlands of jasmine for decorating the altars. When I reached the threshold of womanhood my foster-mother saw in me a predestined soul and resolved to dedicate me to Siva and to reveal to me the mystery of love and faith on the night of Sakty-pudja, in the coming spring. . . ."

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[1] The *bayadères* must not be confused with the *nautch* dancers. The former are ministrants in the temples and enjoy the respect of the worshippers. *Nautch* dancers, on the other hand, are merely professional dancers engaged to furnish entertainment.

The soft, caressing voice trails off into silence, and at the recollection of this blissful moment a tremor of religious ecstasy passes over the exquisitely moulded, amber-tinted body, daringly revealed for these nocturnal invocations of her sacred youth. Then suddenly she awakens from her reverie to ask:

"Have any of you an idea of the Sakty-pudja of the Kanda Swany?"

The hypnotized audience, which on occasion included well-known Orientalists, are compelled to reply that they possess no intimate knowledge of this festivity of license and religious revelry, so she proceeds to enlighten them.

"It was on the purple granite altar of the Kanda Swany that, at the age of thirteen, I danced for the first time, completely nude."

Then, in the midst of the superb luxury of her wealthy patron's home, inspired by the rich food, by the wines, by the seductive lights, by the sensuous perfumes (all prearranged) she begins to explain the mysteries of the Supreme Night on which the holy men of the temple savour in life the cruel but divine ecstasies of Siva's paradise, that terrible god Siva who is the god of all sin, of all misunderstanding, of all cruelty. This recital is illustrated by poses and gestures more provocative than plain speech. The earlier stages of this fantastic orgy which she describes are devoted to meditation in an atmosphere of subtle drugs and Oriental languors. As the awaited moment approaches, when the wise men will announce the appearance in the heavens of the sign of the Three Goddesses, the melodious notes of a concealed orchestra begin to breathe haunting, dreamy harmonies. From the dark recesses of the waving jungle a soft voice warns of the awakening of the sacred serpents, who, tempted by the seductive murmur of the instruments, writhe their long slow length to the temple where Siva awaits their homage. And there they dançe! Among them whirl the curving, undulating bodies of the dainty little *bayadères,* as clammily chill and as naked as the serpents. The remainder of this festivity is indescribable; it eclipses the bacchanalian fêtes of decadent Rome.

This is the beginning of the legend which has grown up about the modern high-priestess of the dance as a religious rite. In conversation with her many admirers she outlines her life as she would have wished it to be. Having no hand in its origin, the next best thing is to prepare the origin which is best adapted to the rôle she has assumed. The rest followed naturally in a romantic sequence which satisfied her love of the dramatic. Mata Hari told how she followed her profession in the temple until one day a handsome English officer saw her performance and, struck by the sadness of her eyes, ventured to violate the sacred rules of her caste by speaking to her. In accordance with the requirements of romance, they fell in love with each other and the adventurous officer by a display of cunning, courage, and resource rescued the little Mata Hari from the prospect of a life devoted to the adoration of the god Siva, and married her. Shortly after their marriage a son, Norman, was born, and by her own account the young mother's cup of happiness was filled to the brim with this new rapture. However, she said, the child did not live long, for a typically Oriental act of poisoning resulted in his death. During a visit to America Mata Hari described in some detail how this tragedy so infuriated her that the savage within her nature rose in revolt, so that with her own hands she strangled the unfaithful servant who had given the child the poisoned cup.

Thus her own account gives to her life a current of vibrant, barbaric adventure, heavily coloured by the mystery and romance of the unknown East, which was rendered all the more plausible by nature's gifts. For this Dutch girl, born in Holland of homely parents, was endowed with a strangely Oriental cast of countenance and an amber-tinted body which she inherited, not from her Hindu parents, but from Jewish progenitors.

Chapter Three

ON THE PURPLE GRANITE ALTAR OF THE KANDA SWANY, at the age of thirteen I was initiated. . . . When I danced before the rajahs on the banks of the sacred Ganges . . ."

These and similar phrases were continually on the lips of Mata Hari as she sought to bind her audiences, or even individuals, for anything with ears to hear was sufficient audience for her, by the fascination of her intimate and secret knowledge of art, beauty, and love. However, there are two counterweights to her highly imaginative narrative which enable us to obtain a much truer picture of her earlier life and actions. One is her own *Life* and the other the brief, frigidly cold, official biography collected by the French police. With the aid of these and the accounts of friends and witnesses it is possible to construct a fairly comprehensive story of her life, the life of Mata Hari, Red Dancer and H21 of the German secret service.

The *Life* is a well-printed volume which enjoys the scarcity of some rare incunabula. It was published in 1906 and the title page reads, in trans-

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lation: "Mata Hari: Mrs. M. G. Zelle MacLeod. History of my daughter's life and my charges against her former husband, with portraits, documents, facsimiles, and supplements, by A. Zelle, czm—C. L. G. Velat, Amsterdam." But in spite of the clear attribution of authorship to the mother, a naïve prefatory note declares that "the earlier chapters of this book have been entirely written by my daughter. As for the later ones, since she lacked the time to finish them herself, they were sent to me from America for completion." The story is too obviously directed against the errant husband to carry much weight as a serious autobiography, and it has only been used by the present writer to corroborate other testimony or to illustrate her thoughts. While we must follow the creation of the legend of Mata Hari, the time has come when she should be stripped of all her improvised art and her specially invented sacred origins and to judge her as a woman. If she is guilty of the crimes attributed to her, if her deeds brought death and maiming to men, tears and mourning to their innocent relatives, then no artistry, no amorous frailty, no pseudo-sacred origin, no peculiar mental viewpoint can condone or mitigate her sin.

The real Mata Hari was born in the little Dutch town of Leeuwarden on August 7, 1876, and was given the baptismal names of Margaret Gertrude. Her nearest approach to Oriental ancestry was a strain of Jewish blood through her father's descent. Adam Zelle was a prosperous business man, but the mother, a good-looking woman of the typical Dutch type, came from the better-class family of Van der Meulen. Margaret's early life seems to have been no more distinguished by incident than that of the blond children who accompanied her to the Cammingha-State school, and who scampered through a happy innocent childhood on the banks of a grey canal. The girl whose dusky beauty was to enslave so many men in high places can recall no incident of these commonplace days other than a preference for one golden-haired little playmate. Doubtless it was the good Vrouw Zelle's intention to have her daughter educated in a superior manner, more in keeping with the Van der Meulen pretensions, which urged her to send Margaret to a school where the girl would be taught to conduct herself becomingly. She was admitted to a Catholic convent at the age of fourteen, precisely the time when, from her own romantic tale, she was being rescued from the Kanda Swany. Thus, instead of being torn from the grasp of fanatical devotees of an unknown mystic cult, she was, in reality, entering the cloistered security of a religious house where young ladies are protected with zealous care.

There she remained until she had reached the age of eighteen and went to spend a vacation at The Hague, the Dutch capital. In this town, where life flows with the turgid tranquillity of its own canal waters, the romantic girl was noticed by a handsome officer whose elegance was turning the heads of the simple Dutch maidens home from school. Captain Campbell MacLeod was no longer a young man, but, said Margaret Gertrude, enthusiastically, "His age renders him still more adorable." Margaret admitted later that she had always suffered from a weakness for officers.

"Anyone who is not an officer," she said to a group of these men, "does not interest me. The officer is a being apart, a kind of artist breathing the grand air in the brilliant profession of arms, in a uniform that is always seductive. Yes, I have had a number of lovers, but they were always good soldiers, brave, ready for battle, and while waiting for it amiable and courteous. To me the officer is a separate race. I have loved only the officer and have never been concerned to know whether the man was German, Italian, or French."

This quaint conceit might have been adopted to flatter the men to whom it was addressed, but its spontaneity would have been sufficient proof of its sincerity if her life had not substantiated her words. What gives this statement a curious tinge of cynicism was the fact that the man who married her in no way fits the standard she had adopted for her officer. MacLeod was of good, even distinguished, Scottish descent and held a commission in the Dutch Colonial Army. At twenty-one he was a vicious young satyr; at forty he was a satiated libertine who continued to flout all decency from acquired habit rather than from active desire. A handsome man of dandified appearance who caressed a tender growth of down on his lip with jewelled fingers, while he cast stealthy glances of admiration upon the shapely young convent-bred girl enjoying her holiday in a town that is not remarkable for its festal life. The inappeasable sex-hunger of the unhappy man could be read in his eyes, and it was this which called to the sensuous Margaret.

They were married and spent a joyous honeymoon among the sedate villas of Wiesbaden, where those drinking the vile waters (or pretending to) could, on occasion, inject no little gaiety into their cure. Walking in the pleasant and orderly public gardens or taking her aperitive at the Kurhaus she must have seen the resplendent type of creature whom she idealized as the officer, the aloof, dignified, and powerful officers of the garrison, so great a contrast to the man whom she had married. Who knows what promising glances she gave the uniformed gods beneath the sportive baskets of rosebuds which decorate the Hotel Rosenblume?

After an unsuccessful attempt at conjugal felicity in the house of MacLeod's sister, where Margaret proved once again that if man is not made to live alone, women are not intended to live together, the newly married couple took a house in the more modern part of Amsterdam. Here their ill-fated son, Norman, was born shortly after their marriage. One of the events which left an ineffaceable impression on the luxury-loving bride dates from this same year. MacLeod had the privilege, as an army officer, of presenting his wife at court. Possibly it was on this occasion when she made her first bow before royalty that she conceived the idea of having kings and princes pay her homage.

Indeed, she now begins to cultivate a new pride. It appears that her husband was not as wealthy as he was supposed to be and his extravagant habits led to trouble. Margaret felt that she was being neglected, and in her loneliness found she was no more than a housekeeper for her gay husband.

"My grandmother was the Baroness Winjbergen," she reminds MacLeod when she revolts agaist this treatment.

But worse is to come. The accomplished libertine whose name she bore would not break off his acquired habits; he rarely was to be found at home. He preferred the companionship of fair but frail ladies, of good fellows with whom he could gamble with all he possessed and a little more. In a short time he had reached a stage of threatened ruin from which nothing but an act of repulsive dishonour saved him. The young wife was instructed to employ her coy glances, her strange Oriental beauty, and her nascent powers of fascination upon a certain wealthy man whose indiscretions made him a suitable object for blackmail. Margaret was not averse to making the attempt.

"But this man was a great admirer of my eyes," she explains in recording this interview in her *Life,* "and I was able to collect several thousands of guilders without having to be unfaithful."

The final qualification, if true, would not have been added, even as an afterthought, a short while later.

After this incident there is a gap in Margaret's life, until we find her husband commanding a battalion of the Colonial Army Reserve in Java, where he is living with his wife and two children. The second child, a daughter called Jeanne Louise, had been born a short while before they left Holland. But, by the time their track has been picked up in this jungle clearing, their domestic relations are the scandal of the Dutch colony.

"It was at Benjoe-Biroe that I got my first whipping," Margaret says, reminiscently.

Shortly after this Margaret began to bombard her father for assistance to secure a legal separation, and the prosperous burgher laid a formal complaint against the husband with the local authorities. At the same time he admonished his daughter to control herself with patience and to have a witness at the next whipping, as this would facilitate a divorce. In this humid atmosphere the flowers of evil germinate quickly and burst into abundant blossoms. Before long the half-demented officer was threatening his wife with a loaded revolver.

"He was in love with another woman," Margaret writes, "and was willing to pay the price of murder for his liberty. He admitted it and warned me that unless we were divorced very quickly he would kill me."

This consummation of folly was rendered unnecessary by the termination of MacLeod's active service. When he was transferred to the reserve of officers the ill-assorted pair returned to Amsterdam and a petition for divorce was promptly instituted. But as if to show her desire for originality the petitioner continued to live with her husband in his sister's home until his incessant drunken revelry led the good lady, or her respectable lawyer husband, to eject them. The MacLeod *ménage* then sought a refuge in a modest dwelling which was not at all in keeping with Margaret's high ambitions. From here the husband went out one night on the familiar pretext of mailing a letter and took their sick child with him so that she might benefit from the air. He did not return. Or, rather, he only returned when Margaret had recovered the custody of the little Jeanne through the aid of the courts, pending a decision of her petition for divorce. When MacLeod did return to the Van Breestrat home he promptly installed a new mistress. He then proceeded to settle accounts with Margaret in a manner characteristic of a man who fails to give his wife any financial assistance. He caused a notice to be inserted in the newspapers that he would no longer be responsible for his wife's debts.

This pious act of repudiation roused Margaret to a pitch of fury, for she declared that it was instrumental in closing the doors of all her friends, even that of her noble and virtuous aunt, Baroness Landes, where she had found a temporary refuge. But Dutch doors are not so puritanical that they close automatically upon those whose sole error is to have contemplated divorce from a savage, drunken husband. Dutch hospitality has a warmer reputation. Be that as it may, Margaret MacLeod found herself on the street with a sick child, without clothes, and for riches the sum of three and a half florins.

At this point we leave the old Margaret. Her apprenticeship among the cherubim of hell now begins. The Red Dancer begins to take form among the mists that blow in from the North Sea. It may be added, in passing, that the Dutch courts, having refused her the divorce for which she applied, granted it shortly after to her husband, to the profound indignation of her posthumous admirers.

Chapter Four

THE PARIS DÉBUT OF MATA HARI HAD A ludicrous termination. Light upon this stage of her life has been wanting, so that these few scant details will be interesting since they are new. Finding all havens closed to her in Amsterdam, Margaret decided to admit failure and returned to the parental home in The Hague. But the prosperous and highly respected burgher-father killed no fatted calf for the wanderer. Instead, he was ready enough to provide the means of removing his daughter from the neighbourhood. Furnished with the necessary funds, Margaret made for Paris, determined to make her début as a dancer. But since she had no professional training and had to find a means of livelihood until her act was ready, she did what so many other young stage people do—she posed as a model for painters.

"On the purple granite altar of the Kanda Swany . . ."

But between the coasts of Malabar and La Rotonde many waters flow. Margaret was twenty-seven when she knocked one morning at a studio door in the Montparnasse district.

"I am seeking employment as a model," she explained to the artist.

"Very good," he replied. "Let me see your figure."

"Oh no! I want to pose only for the head," was her horrified response. "I am the widow of a colonel who died in the Indies and left me with two sons. I am trying to educate them but have no resources."

"In that case your beauty ought to secure you some sittings for the head, but you will be paid much less than if you will pose for the full figure, for, from what I can gather, you must have a pretty figure. At any rate, I don't insist."

Margaret lamented the immolation of her modesty, the outrage to her distinguished family, and, generally, made use of the familiar arguments, but when the painter told her abruptly that she could do just whatever she pleased she began to undress.

To this man and to other artists we owe the explosion of another portion of the bubble of her legendary life. Artists who saw her have all borne testimony to the beauty of Mata Hari's figure, several declaring that they had never seen such lovely shaped arms. But for the employment as a model she had one grave defect—her bust was pendulous and ugly. During her dances she never bared her breasts, although this was the only part of her body which was covered. Invariably she wore a jewelled covering for her bosom. The Red Dancer had her own explanation to offer for this and it reflected more to the type of credit she coveted.

"My husband," she used to say, "often threatened to disfigure me so that no other man would desire me."

She claimed that in one of his fits of erotic dementia the man had attacked her in such a ferocious fashion that she was mutilated. "That is why," she would conclude the story, "I have not cared to exhibit my complete torso."

However, to return to her application for employment. The disappointment of the artist that such a promising model was not satisfactory for his purpose caused him to remark that, after all, she had better pose for the head alone. Either she felt her modesty was outraged by this, or, what is more likely, her vanity was shocked, but the innocent statement produced what the French call a *crise de nerfs,* in which the artist had to call for his wife's assistance and, to soothe Margaret's injured modesty (or vanity), the painter did make use of her in a poster which occupied him at the time. She was in the grimly appropriate character of Messalina! Thus the poster of the Gaîté's produc-

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tion of Isador de Lara's "Messalina" was posed by Mata Hari, and no one has yet commented on the grim symbolism of the combination.

In 1903 she made her début as a dancer, less than a year after the inhospitable doors of her virtuous relations had closed upon her. What success she had or might have reaped from this initial appearance is only a matter of speculation, because the outraged Scottish husband clamoured for protection against anyone bearing the honoured name of his puritanical ancestors consecrating herself to the art of the dance in the modern Babylon. In the first flush of his outraged pride he wrote an indignant letter to his wife, threatening to have her enclosed in a convent if she did not conduct herself with more modesty and dignity.

This unexpected document afflicted Margaret with a mingling of tears, fear, and revolt. She demanded telegraphic counsel of her relatives, and as a result of their replies she voluntarily returned to Holland and went into seclusion amid the austere rusticity of Nimegue, in order to escape the mediæval vengeance of her irate husband. To the enthusiastic admirers of Mata Hari this period of her life has been likened to the Agony in the Garden. The crazy, muddled drug addicts whose celestial system centres round the more obscure night haunts of Paris and extends only to the other bank of the Seine, picture life in this little Dutch town as refined torture for the soul that sought the unbounded liberty of the stars, the unmeasured spaces of love, and the unplumbed depths of Siva's paradise. But they are a little in advance of time. The constellation of the Three Goddesses was not yet reported to have appeared in the firmament. None the less, Margaret hated the place.

"Am I to remain here for the rest of my days?" she wails in January of 1904. Truly one who has known the joys of Parisian life will understand that the innocent festivities of Nimegue are a poor substitute. It was doubtless the repression of this period which caused her to fly to the other extreme when she escaped. In place of the glaring footlights which she coveted was the pale reflection of the sun in the copper dishes on the walls; the only audience were the curious housewives who peered from behind discreetly drawn curtains as the woman of the dance-halls flitted down the silent street; and for music, the joyous music her heart loved, there was only the metallic clank of the municipal belfry when the bell-ringers practised their ingenuous hobby. The grey little town which dwells in the almost perpetual shadow of sea mists must have seemed as remote from the delights of the City of Light as was Benjoe-Biroe in the Javanese jungle.

"I shall triumph sooner or later," she cries defiantly from the enveloping fog.

And then one day she summons her courage and descends upon the gay Paris like a thunderclap. Margaret Gertrude Zelle is no more, the curtain rises definitely on the Red Dancer.

Chapter Five

MATA HARI ESTABLISHED HER REPUTATION IN Paris; she achieved the highest flights of her fame in that city, and her other conquests, in Berlin, Rome, Vienna, London, were but reflections of her Parisian success. Her first efforts were in public, on the vaudeville stage, where she speedily gained a sympathetic reception by the novelty of her dancing. But it was not as a dancer that she coveted a reputation. Of one thing about her dancing we may be certain: as an art such as Isadora Duncan conceived it or as Loie Fuller imagined it, Mata Hari had no conception. Dancing to her was nothing more than a means of attracting attention, of displaying the splendour of her beauty, with the ultimate object of captivating her lovers. Like many another artist who has imagined herself greater than her art, Mata loved the adulation offered to a popular favourite, but better than a large audience in a theatre she loved the intimacy afforded by private engagements in some luxurious apartment where, before a select audience of refined profligates, and brilliant, wealthy, dilettantes she could explain with greater free-

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SAN RAFAEL, CALIFORNIA

dom the sensuous rites of the fantastic cult to which she had promoted herself the high-priestess.

Her ideal was to become a famous—the most famous—courtesan, and to achieve it she invented her sacred origin and improvised an art. The opportunity she sought was to exhibit her lovely amber body among gold and precious stones, to pose rhythmically among sumptuous transparencies. The rest was only decoration to conceal, justify, and stimulate the underlying sensual debauch.

"When in my infancy I danced before rajahs on the shores of the sacred Ganges . . ."

In point of fact, Mata Hari's knowledge of the orgies practised in Brahmanist temples and sanctuaries was derived exclusively from books. The most she had ever seen were the dances of the tiny Javanese *bayas* in those villages she had visited while her husband was with the Dutch colonial forces. Between these diminutive little creatures (more like automatic toys than flesh and blood) and the *apsaras* of the Brahman temples there is a huge gulf. One is the incarnation of some abstract ancestral rite grown ghostly by its tenuous prolongation through the ages; the other is the realization of a morbid drug-distorted vision of bestiality, thinly veiled behind a religious significance.

There may have been moments when she took her charlatanry seriously, but that Mata Hari's dances had any religious meaning is the fantasy of minds not less distorted than her own. As the shadows closed around her in the prison of Saint-Lazare she gratefully accepted the ministrations of two Catholic nuns, and on the morning of her execution actually received the rite of baptism from the hands of an Anabaptist pastor. Two days after her sentence she begged the prison doctor to obtain for her some books to beguile the weary hours. Doubtful about her tastes, the doctor begged for some guidance in the selection, suggesting the works of such popular writers as Marcel Prévost, Bourget, and Rosny. She rejected these suggestions with scorn.

"Stories about the middle classes never interested me," she declared. "To you I can confess that I have never been able to read through one of those works which are called comedies of manners. What I do like is poetry which has mystery, religion, legend, and magic. I firmly believe that the only means of living in beauty consists in avoiding the thousand and one daily annoyances which interfere with an existence in the full ideal. That is why I cannot tolerate European things, not even the religion." At which declaration she shook an admonitory finger at the doctor and continued, "Now do not go and tell that to the poor religious who are trying so hard to convert me. Those unhappy people do not understand what the word religion means on my lips and they would certainly cross themselves piously if they knew that I mingled dances and caresses in my liturgy. . . . For I am a Hindu, although born in Holland. Hindu? Yes, certainly. You who are an intelligent man will say that there must be something European in me. No, there is not. I am absolutely Oriental.

"Further, the Orient alone interests me deeply. When one speaks of motherlands my soul turns to a distant country where a golden pagoda is mirrored in a winding stream. I do not know exactly what I am or where I am from. From Benares, from Golconda, from Gwalior, from Madura, what does it matter? There is a secret in my origin, in my blood. It will be known sometime later, but, for my own part, I have barely penetrated the fringe of the secret."

The doctor said that at this point of the invocation of her illusory cradle a look of great sadness came over her eyes. This man, who knew little of her imaginary birth and life, declares that he was baffled by the complexity of her nature. He maintains that she possessed nothing of the nature, type, character, culture, mind, or appearance of the women of Europe; there was something of the primitive savage and at the same time something sacerdotal and refined about her. Concerning the fuller development of her studies she continued:

"Formerly, my favourite reading was that which informed me how to love life and savour voluptuous delights with a passionate, Sybaritical enjoyment. In the *Prem Sagar* there are chapters which make the senses reel as though one was intoxicated with sensuous drugs. And the works of Kalidasa and his disciples, with their tenderness and picturesque subtlety, have furnished me with entire days of ecstasy. I smile when I hear people say that scenic art reaches its apogee in Paris. Yonder, in India, each passion has its perfume and colour. Thus, love is blue, pleasure white, tenderness rose, and heroism red. As a new sentiment is about to dominate a drama the decoration changes tints and the atmosphere changes its aroma. . . . The lovers really love, actually engage in the love embrace on the stage in full view of the audience. They hate just as truly. The pursuit and attack is real. I have seen blood on the hands of some of the actors. Ah, those legends of chivalry! those stories of Rajput warriors who, with a saffron tunic over their coat of mail, went forth seeking marvellous adventures. . . . And the romances of proud Brahmanist daughters enamoured of their pages, imprisoned in a citadel for years because of their love, without renouncing the hope of escape which would enable them to flee some day and join the faithful lovers who awaited them at the door of the pagoda.

"Nothing is more poetic, nobler, or greater than what remains to us of ancient India."

Instead of the *Imitation of Christ,* which appears to be the favoured study of condemned prisoners, Mata Hari chose the *Lotus of Faith,* a Buddhist book of instruction which teaches a contempt for everything in life. Even under the shadow of the broad wings of hovering death this extraordinary woman could command her imagination to furnish the ecstasies she had formerly been able to realize through the flesh. It is needless to say that in these confidences her recollections were mere flights of fancy and not efforts of memory. That artistic touch of the actors with blood-reeking hands was sheer imagination—the poetic licence of the story-teller, like so much else in her autobiography. For Mata Hari's heart found sustenance in two things—imagination and love of the carnal kind.

So much, then, for her religion—it was art and love. Yet, to those who suffered from her deception, she insisted upon the religious significance of her art. To one admirer she wrote: "As you know, every true temple dance (not those of the street and the public places) is a theological treatise and should explain in pose and gesture the rules of the Vedas, the sacred books."

Since these sacred books contain the most complete description of the joys of sensual love, of the arts to be practised by the courtesan who desires to become successful, and the captivating graces to be employed in retaining the affections of a lover, they were appropriately chosen to form the basis of her art. That they were religious treatises was an accident. Not only in her public appearances, but in the intimacy of her boudoir she tried to invoke the vision of the divine Brahma in the half-lights of an ancient sanctuary; of mysterious flowers, exotic, luscious, stupefying; of the undulating coils of the writhing serpent interlaced with rich foliage. The beautiful amber-tinted body glides with infinite grace among the illusive disorder of diaphanous, floating veils, and the intoxication of subtly penetrating perfumes.

For her "Sacred Flower Dance," a favourite with her, based upon the legend of the goddess with the power of embodying herself within the petals of a flower, she writes in several letters to one of her associates, ordering the musical accompaniment just as a banker's wife orders a gown for a special occasion.

The music of "The Flowing Waters" will serve as an overture to convey the impression that the temple is in a forest with a murmuring cascade within hearing. A prince comes to plead before the goddess, seated like a bronze statue on her altar. He enters the temple bearing exquisite orchids, the incarnation of the divinity, whose place on the altar has been taken for this rite by a priestess. As the prince makes intercession to the goddess before her altar he burns the blossoms in sacrifice. To him the priestess makes this terrible prediction: "You will die as everything must die. Make your life a succession of delicious and glorious moments. Better that you pass on this earth through moments of intense sensation and then depart, than drag your body through an old age that is without beauty and satisfaction."

As the ecstatic fumes from the burning flowers intoxicate the prince, the priestess (which shall be me) rises and dances, explaining in pose and gesture the rules of the Veda, the holy books of the Brahma. The music must express the pose of the incarnation, the apparition of the flower, its unfolding into blossom, the closing of its petals, all typifying the powers of Brahma, Vishnu, and Siva—that is to say, creation, fruitfulness, decay. The whole fades into obscurity; prince, goddess, and high-priestess disappear.

This, then, is the rôle she has chosen. She adds a point of exclamation in one of her letters in which she says that Siva is the god of sin; he "must have a power of destruction which equals, if it does not surpass, the good of Brahma." Siva was her favourite god; she became the symbol of his cult and she recruited many worshippers.

No such weird fantasy could ever have become an accepted doctrine if preached from the stage of a vaudeville theatre, and well Mata Hari knew it. In the sepulchral solitude of Nimegue the idea was developed until in 1905, when she returned to Paris, Mata Hari did not seek engagements immediately on the stage. Her campaign was more subtle once the opportunity had suggested itself, and the suggestion came from a most unexpected source. She proposed to give a performance of Javanese dances in the Guimet Museum, which is devoted to the collection of Oriental curiosities. Here, beneath the enigmatic smile of a great golden Buddha, she danced in the discreet costume of saffron-coloured veils before a specially invited audience, never suspecting the possibilities of the display until a grave and learned scholar gave her the clue. All Orientalists are distinguished for their gravity. A bearded scholar of Eastern lore rose and explained to the awed audience the meaning of the rhythmic ceremony they were about to witness. Having completed his discourse, Mata Hari was called on to appear in her saffron veilings and, with her face glowing from the excitement of the scholar's suggestions, she danced her "Black Pearl" dance.

Needless to say that at this stage of her career (1905-06) Mata Hari was almost wholly ignorant of the Brahman religion and its ceremonial dances. All she proposed to do was to give a romantic version of the stiff and mechanical movements of the little Javanese dancers. But the grave old Oriental scholar had put an idea into her receptive brain and she nourished it with care. Next morning the Paris newspapers were filled with the novelty of this extraordinary performance in a museum of serious studies, and she decided to reap the full benefit of her sudden fame.

"On the purple granite altar of the Kanda Swany I danced for the first time . . ."

In reality, then, the first step on the ladder was not on the coasts of Malabar, but on the Paris boulevards. From the museum of Oriental art to the *salon* of the Chilean minister was the next step, but this was not a resting-place; it was no more than a breathing space on the rapid rise to ascendency. Besides, she had not yet reached the stage of complete nudity which she was to favour. That only came when the Princess Murat invited her to perform before an exclusive assembly in her city palace. Later the Prince del Drago placed her on the topmost pinnacle of notoriety when he gave a celebration which was designed to revolve around the central figure of a *bayadère*—Mata Hari. It was these evenings among the socially elect which gave her most delight, not the public performances at the Olympia or in the chill scholastic atmosphere of the Guimet Museum. Besides, they were infinitely more profitable in the outcome. High though her earnings as a dancer were, much more money was required to indulge her extravagant tastes and the indiscriminate charity which she dispensed. The effect of these displays can best be understood with the aid of a spectator's recollections.

"You can scarcely credit the mystic frenzy produced by her lascivious attitudes," he said. "Her nervous tremors, her violent contortions, were terribly impressive. There was in the performance something of the solemnity of an idol, something of the loathsome horror of a writhing reptile. From her great sombre eyes, half closed in sensuous ecstasy, there gleamed an uncanny light, like phosphorescent flames. She seemed to embrace an invisible being in her long shapely arms. Her braceleted legs were glossy and well moulded, they so quivered through excessive effort that it seemed the tendons must burst through the enveloping skin. To witness the spectacle was to receive the impression that one had actually been present at the metamorphosis of a serpent taking a woman's form."

A serpent, always a serpent!

Chapter Six

But she prospered exceedingly. From 1905, when she first developed the idea of becoming a civilized *bayadère,* her love affairs followed her like an unending procession. From her admirers she received such substantial homage that before long she was established in a sumptuous apartment near the Champs-Élysées, she had her private carriage and a collar of pearls. This may not exactly be the apogee of her existence (that was reserved for her German career), but it certainly represents the highest peak of her artistic life. A man who knew her well without having succumbed to her fatal charm, but who had many opportunities of studying her at this time, gives a description of Mata Hari which denies her claim to beauty.

"She was not," he maintained, "really pretty. Her features lacked refinement. There was something bestial about the lips, cheeks, and jaw. Her brown skin always had the appearance of having been anointed with oil or was exuding perspiration. Her bust was flat and drooping and always concealed from view. Only her eyes and arms were absolute in their beauty. Those who said she had the most beautiful arms in the world did not exaggerate. And her eyes! Eyes that were magnetic and enigmatic, ever changing, yet ever of velvety softness, commanding and pleading, melancholy and mean, those terrible eyes in whose depths so many souls were drowned, actually merited the adoration awarded them."

Paul Namur painted two portraits of her at this time, one in street costume, which seems to have disappeared, and the other a dance pose in the nude which shows her wearing an Indian diadem and a collar of emeralds and topaz. Mata made several sittings for them, and the artist had the opportunity to exercise his trained observation on her. His recollections are interesting.

"The most striking thing about her," he says, "was the astonishing fact that this spoiled darling, upon whom destiny had showered gifts, grace, talent, fame, rarely lost the expression of inmost sadness. Frequently she would recline in an armchair, dreaming of secret things for perhaps an hour. I cannot recall that I ever saw Mata Hari smile."

Another time he said:

"She was as superstitious as a Hindu. Once, while disrobing, a jade bracelet slipped from her wrist. She turned quite pale and cried:

" 'That will bring me bad luck. You will see. It is a presentiment of misfortune. Keep it, that horrid bracelet. I never want to see it again.' "

The Paris of her day was the most fertile ground for cultivating love as a subtle and very complicated science. She never practised the simpler arts of coquetry so familiar to the chic *Parisienne,* and it was this original development as a science rather than as an art which carried her to the position from which she could exercise such a malign influence when Paris became an entrenched camp. Unfortunately, Paris, which is the pleasure ground of the entire world as well as the capital of France, is as capricious in its loves as are most other things where pleasure is the main motive. There is nothing so completely satiating as the same delight repeated without variation. Mata's position began to slip. She had imitators who roused her fury because she felt they were stealing her thunder. After a short disappearance from the stage to devote herself exclusively to a new and exigent adorer she writes to a friend:

> I want to begin work afresh, to expose myself to all the cares to which glory (!) exposes us, but I want

to have the credit for what I do. I no longer want to see others working on my ideas.

This becomes the theme of several of her existing letters. And then, there was a waning popularity when she appeared in public. The inevitable was taking place. Art was the chosen expression for advertising her ministry at the altar of love; she desired to have the reputation of an Isadora Duncan without that artist's varied and extensive repertoire, her talent, and her broader conception of art. Isadora Duncan was primarily an artist living for her art, sacrificing herself to its demands. Mata Hari was first of all a courtesan; if she appealed to art it was only as a subterfuge. There were fits of unbridled rage when she was denied this right to which she pretended. The capricious Parisians began to tire of her public appearances, and with the decrease in their adulation she felt her position slipping from her. The press which had greeted her favourably grew lukewarm, and then chilling. The Paris audiences refused to regard her as anything but what she pretended to be, an artist, and Mata Hari had her moments of pride. She would be content with nothing but the position of a goddess whose character she was always ready to assume. She did not wish to be everything to any one man, but to be all things to all men.

This excessive vanity was her downfall. Casting about for a locale where her artistic pretensions would be taken at their proper value and her true character recognized, she thought of her former reception in Berlin. What the French gave so niggardly would be yielded generously by the Germans, who adored her. Therefore, she accepted another engagement in Berlin in 1907.

"There are times when I almost believe in the caprices of fate," she once wrote to an admirer. "But a moment's thought convinces me that destiny is what we make it."

If this is true, then it was in Berlin that Mata Hari shaped the destiny which conducted her to the rifle-range at Vincennes. Of her residence in Berlin little is known, partly because the German secret service (or that of any other nation) does not seek publicity for the work of its agents, and partly because association with men of very high social standing ensured a conspiracy of silence on her actions. We know very little of her life other than that she was speedily welcomed by the male aristocracy of the nation. She accompanied the Crown Prince to the army manœuvres in Silesia, appeared in Berlin night life as the companion of the young Duke of Brunswick, had other admirers of less exalted station, and, consciously or unconsciously, became a spy.

It is not possible to understand how a woman like Mata Hari could become a spy without having an elementary knowledge of the methods adopted by the German secret police in recruiting their agents, and without knowing why other women were persuaded to accept this highly dangerous employment. It is the practice of most countries to avoid using a woman for this work if a man is available; in England it is an almost invariable rule never to employ women, and the English have good reasons for their action. Of the most conspicuous spies of recent years who have paid the penalty for their labors, women like Marguerite Francillard, "Eva," the old ogre Tichelly, Yvonne Schadeck, and Anne Garnier, all of them with the one exception of Tichelly (who had a warped sense of morality in general) were dragged into the business because they had fallen in love with men who were already in the secret service. Coudoyannis, the Greek, a very active and highly paid spy, found that a little friend was essential in his character as a man about town, but no sooner had he secured one than his chief writes to offer him the alternative of dismissing her or of luring her into the service. The idea of making use of their mistresses was part of the doctrine taught by certain instructors. Indeed, it is known that the notorious Frau Henrichsen (known to the French also as "Mlle. Doktor"), who was head of the Antwerp branch of the organization, was recruited in exactly the same way from the Berlin *demimonde.* Marussia Destrelles, Mata Hari's friend, certainly was enrolled by that means.

There is no more perplexing problem in Mata Hari's life than this: why should she become a spy? There can be little doubt that it was not for love of money, for, contrary to popular belief, a spy's salary is miserably inadequate to the potential danger incurred. Of the actual payment to spies we have abundant evidence. Even during the war it was no more than a mere pittance, certainly not enough to tempt anyone who had other resources. Captain Estève, recruited in Barcelona, was furnished with 300 francs (about $60) in addition to his railway fare and sent to seek information in France. Sydnet, who toured an American vaudeville circuit as a gymnast, received 500 pesetas (about $100) to blow up Les Invalides! Spies in England occasionally received as much as $2,000 at a time, but this was considered high remuneration and had to satisfy them for some time. Such wretched payment, then, could be no temptation to Mata Hari, who could earn much more in the safety of vaudeville contracts and who had no lack of enthusiastic admirers ready and willing to compete for her favours and to provide her with every conceivable luxury. Her extravagance was colossal; she was accustomed to throw money out of the window, as the French say, and the only time she is known to have demanded money from German official sources was when she was stranded in Madrid.

Major Massard, of the French staff, was of opinion that pride had caused Mata Hari to accept this dangerous employment. True, she loved to assert her power over men of influence, and we shall presently see that she had many opportunities to exercise this power over men in very high places. A high official in Spain who knew her well, and is among her stoutest defenders, thinks vanity could have seduced her if anything could have done so. She never was proof against her own vanity—happy the woman who is, and rare. Still another, and this man speaks with authority, since he watched her closely through several years as a counter-espionage agent, told the writer:

"She was probably inspired by a woman's natural instinct to play with fire, a form of amusement which will endure so long as women are denied the means of letting off steam which men enjoy." Then elaborating this opinion he went on: "Look at her life! It is one debauch after another and one debauch is much the same as another. There is nothing so completely satiating as a surfeit of unvarying pleasure, and the more intense it is the more quickly is satiety reached. All it does is to create a lust for fresh sensations, and once the palate has ceased to savour the delight of one form of pleasure, another must be found which will stimulate the jaded appetite. It requires a violent stimulant to gratify anyone who has drunk to the dregs from the cup of physical passion. Mata Hari found consolation in the thrills of dangerous intrigue when she began to lose interest in the older and more familiar pleasures. That is all."

Some or all of these emotions—love of power, the lust of an insatiable vanity, the quest of new physical thrills—might have had their part in impelling Mata Hari to undertake the work, but the simple truth is that she was a spy before she knew it, and, once begun, it was impossible to withdraw. In accepting employment with Abteilung III, the German intelligence service, a spy had the most exacting task-master, for once the agent became restive or his reports ceased to be

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useful from inaccuracy or inadequacy, the disciplinary action was severe and inevitable.

The usual method was to send the delinquent some message in an indiscreet manner, so that it would fall into the enemy's hands and so expose his activities to the authorities of the nation against whom he was working or against whom he refused to work. There are many known examples of this hateful practice; one, that of the beautiful Marussia Destrelles, a friend of Mata Hari's, we shall give at some length in its proper place. A better-known instance is that of Karl Graves, since it led to some discussion in the British House of Commons, although the replies then given to anxious patriots may not be taken too seriously, as will presently be seen.

Dr. Karl Graves had performed some prodigies of secret-service work for the authorities of the Wilhelmstrasse. His most sensational feat in this direction was at Port Arthur, where he secured the information of Japanese movements which would have been of incalculable value to the Russian authorities had he not sent it directly to Berlin. He was also active in the Balkans during the first Balkan War. But for some reason the officials of Abteilung III became displeased with him and he was sent to England (or Scotland, to be exact), where an undisguised communication of a confidential nature addressed to him through the mail led to his arrest. It was frank betrayal and the English authorities knew it. So did Graves. Nevertheless, he was tried and sentenced to a sharp term of imprisonment. To those sensitive moralists who desire to know that retribution always overtakes the sinner it may be interesting to say that Karl Graves never served this sentence. The British Intelligence secured the release of this highly embittered man and provided him with employment—as a spy against his former employers! The British had extraordinary success in utilizing former enemy agents of outstanding merit in this way.

It has been asserted by some of her admirers that Mata Hari only succumbed to a sudden temptation to undertake spying during the excitement of the war, when her employment as a vaudeville artist was restricted, but this can easily be disproved. To begin with, the system of numbering spies betrayed her pre-war enrollment. No spy is known, even to the higher officials, by name. They are invariably addressed and known by a number. Mata Hari was H21. The enlargement of the service during the war made necessary an alteration in the system of numbering, so that the headquarters of the spy and the nation against whom he was operating would be easily recognized by those who had to collate reports. Spies recruited during the war received a symbol composed of two letters and a number. The first letter was the initial of the town where their headquarters was situated, and the second letter was the initial of the name of the country in which they worked. Had Mata Hari been enrolled during the war she would have received the symbol AF, followed by a number, representing the initials of the words Antwerp and France (Andversen and Frankreich in German).

The second piece of material evidence of her earlier employment as a spy is the simple fact that the British authorities were well aware of her activities long before the outbreak of war. In fact, the French did not "discover" her. They only began to take her under surveillance when she was signalled to them by the British service. So well was she watched by the men from London that Mata Hari was under no illusion about their recognition of her labours. No sooner did she betray any interest in an English officer than he was warned of his danger or was transferred quickly to some spot remote from her wiles and baleful influence.

Before proceeding to describe how Mata Hari became entangled in the toils of secret intrigues let us pause in her story long enough to see how the German authorities secured their recruits in times of peace. Mention has been made of a Greek, Constantine Coudoyannis, who was known in the London and Paris *demi-monde* as Count Costa de Smyrnos. Before his self-elevation to the nobility Count Costa was a pedlar who tramped through France, Belgium, and Germany as far as the Prussian capital. When the Count reviewed his past he surveyed as fine a standing crop of wild oats as the limited means of a pedlar would permit him to cultivate. Visiting the Prussian capital, he decided to take a day off from peddling in order to view the *haut-monde,* and was enjoying a casual stroll down the Unter den Linden when, in his own parlance, he was "pinched" by the police for some inexplicable reason. His elastic conscience was under no strain, for his last delinquency could not have attracted the attention of the awe-inspiring police of the capital. To the pedlar's amazement he was not conducted to a police station, but to an imposing apartment in the official quarter. There, to his consternation, he was confronted with a very minute account of his petty larcenies and rascalities committed in various other countries.

The dignified police official who interviewed him on the subject was a worthy man who was roused to a pitch of fury by the mere recital of these misdemeanours; he stormed and thundered at the terrified pedlar in the name of outraged law and order, informing him that the French and Belgian authorities (this was before the war) demanded his extradition in order to provide condign punishment for his long list of misdeeds. Having succeeded in reducing the pedlar to a state of terror at the prospect of spending his near future in a foreign prison, the burly uniformed officer began to coo as mildly as a dove. He informed the scared pedlar that the might of the German Empire might be enlisted to aid an accomplished linguist in return for certain services to be rendered at the expense of the two countries which sought to punish him. He was to become a German secret agent: the pedlar's pack was to be abandoned and Constantine would become a man of means and leisure. The unhappy Greek left that house on the highroad to a self-chosen patent of nobility and, later, a firing-squad. As a pedlar he was gifted. He spoke several languages fluently and had a spy's sacred respect for papers that were absolutely correct, in order that embarrassing questions might be avoided. It was his affection for papers of identity which had enabled the German police to track him over half of Europe, through most of his life's history, and to concoct the story against him which induced the terrified man to undertake work that eventually led to his death.

In considering the course of Mata Hari's life in Berlin and the reasons which induced her to engage in the most desperate sport in the world, one should have in mind the declaration of von Kroon, one of the heads of German espionage in Spain, who, with admirable but tactless candour, said that they made use of Mata Hari because she was the only woman they knew who had the ability to cultivate intimacy and to secure the confidence of certain highly placed officials whose weakness made them excellent prospects for an intelligent secret agent. This is probably true. The methods they adopted in Mata Hari's case will remain for all time the secret of the Berlin authorities, but their effects may be noted. The situation was this: Of ordinary spies they had an abundance and could recruit as many more as they required, but in the selection of the higher type of spies, those who could move with freedom among men in the highest official circles, their choice was severely restricted. Mata Hari's well-known reputation as a courtesan showed that she had the means of entry to these circles; she was, therefore, admirably designed for the work. All that remained was to lure her into it. Her profession was to become her surest defence against suspicion at a later time; now it was the easiest means of attack.

Mata Hari told her judges frankly how she came to make the acquaintance of Herr von Jagow, the chief of the Berlin police.

"I met him at the music-hall where I was playing," she said. "In Germany the police have the right to censor the costumes worn by the *artistes* and some one had thought that I was insufficiently clad. So the chief of police came to inspect my costume."

Now anyone who had experience of the German police during the heyday of the Empire will recall the position of dominating authority held by that official who commanded the police in the capital. He was an official of such unapproachable dignity and importance that the inspection of a dancer's costume would positively have been the duty of his fourth or fifth assistant unless, of course, there was an excellent reason why the chief himself should undertake the task. In this case the dancer had a place in their wide schemes which made her the suitable subject for a personal visit.

She proved a willing victim. In a short time she was recognized as an intimate friend of the police chief, so intimate that he had made himself responsible for providing her with an imposing apartment in Berlin. But the very nature of the gift betrays its significance. Again let us pause to glance at the German methods; it will furnish a clearer understanding of Mata Hari's mission.

Mata Hari played a part in the compilation of one of the most amazing *Who's Who* ever revealed to the eyes of the public. It was not intended for publication, far from it, but a clever agent employed by the British got possession of the only known copy from under the nose of the German secret service and the London authorities permitted the publication of extracts as a solemn warning against the cultivation of friendships with foreigners who might not scruple to abuse confidences. This book was the accumulation of all the gossip, scandal, sins, personal weaknesses, delinquencies, and domestic infelicities of influential people, collected by spies, amateur and professional, which Germany employed against England. The preparation of the book lasted over many years, but it seems never to have served the purpose for which it was intended. It was the intention of the Berlin authorities to use this knowledge of a man's hidden past in order to blackmail the victim into furnishing aid or information not otherwise obtainable. The numerous agents who collected the information for the volume must have been singularly credulous, for most of the biographies were pure fiction and would not have been of the slightest value in a time of need. The extracts published so distorted the truth that they were received with derision.

These, however, applied to well-known people whose lives were more or less public property. Some of the matter included was not quite so ridiculous, especially in the lives of the younger and less known officials who had occasion to visit Berlin and fall into the acquaintance of Mata Hari and her kind. The method of obtaining this information is interesting. The luxurious apartment furnished for her occupation in the exclusive neighbourhood of the Wilhelmstrasse was an expensive residence even for one of Mata Hari's reputation. This famous "Green House" was one of Stieber's legacies to the German police. It had played its part in Bismarckian days in entangling many unwilling victims in the web of the Iron Chancellor's policies. The cost of its maintenance came from the funds allocated for secret service, and the servants were all, or nearly all, police agents. Skilfully engineered introductions to the right people enabled Mata Hari to entertain the victims of the police curiosity, and since their chief was a man of magnanimous parts he permitted these same victims to share the favours of his mistress. Having introduced the victim into her web, Mata Hari would stage one of those sensual orgies for which she was famous, and the police agents were granted unlimited opportunity to secure substantial blackmail evidence to be filed away pending the time when it would be required for their schemes. French, Italian, and Russian officers were treated by this Delilah with fine impartiality. It is remarked that Mata Hari had little luck with the English.

This is not altogether evidence of the sobriety or chastity of the English officials, because they had the somewhat unfair advantage over the lady of having one of their agents employed in the house. For many years, whenever Mata Hari tried to approach an English agent she was rudely repulsed, yet it never seems to have dawned upon her employers that there might be an excellent reason why she should invariably fail with the men of this nation.

Nor were all her activities restricted to Berlin. One of the tragedies of the war was that of a jolly Dutchman called Hoegnagel, who was recommended by Mata Hari as a suitable recruit for the German service when they desired one. Hoegnagel was known to Mata from the time of her residence in The Hague; he was the type which interested her. He was the perfect example of henpecked husband whose pockets were cleaned out every night by a thrifty Dutch housewife, a practice which prevented him largely from indulging in the pleasures of the city which were his dearest joy. This weakness of his for pleasure with the handicap of an inquisitive and thrifty wife standing like a mounted policeman watching over his efforts to amuse himself had been reported to the German consul in The Hague by Mata Hari. While he remained in this city, Hoegnagel was no use to the German authorities, but when he announced to his friends in the Marine Club that he was compelled to make an extended visit to Paris on legitimate business, the unhappy man's possibilities immediately presented themselves to the watchful consul, who offered him the amazing opportunity of enjoying the pleasures of the French capital without the careful Vrouw Hoegnagel being any the wiser or poorer.

The Germans have frequently been reproached for their lack of ability to read psychology. They stumbled here when it seemed that they had judged remarkably well. Hoegnagel accepted the consul's offer after a little hesitation. He was a neutral and did not readily agree to serve a belligerent country against another which had not merited his hatred. But the temptation was too strong. He did want to have a good time in Paris without his wife knowing about it. Where the psychology went astray was that the Germans had completely overlooked the effect of the astounding phenomenon of a Dutchman dispensing money with a liberality foreign to his race and habits. It immediately aroused the suspicion of the French police, who were not long in uncovering his activities.

Incidentally, this man Hoegnagel has a special interest for American readers. Once his so-called journalistic activities were found to be directed toward informing the German authorities in Holland of the situation in Paris, a counter-espionage agent was deftly introduced into his little circle of intimate acquaintances. The agent talked confidentially of the influential people whom he knew and impressed Hoegnagel as a well-informed man. To him the Dutchman appealed for authentic information on a matter which was gravely exercising the Germans. Would America take an active part in the war? Would American soldiers be sent across the Atlantic to fight? The agent was doubtful, but, being anxious to help his friend, the pair went off to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, where

Hoegnagel was informed that President Wilson had informed his French friend, President Poincaré, that no American troops were to be expected in Europe, that the country was against such action.

The unhappy Hoegnagel was shot at Vincennes in January, 1918. When he was awakened on the last morning of his life he said:

"It is true, then? You are really going to shoot me? I have been a good father to my family and what has happened is only an unfortunate incident of travel."

"An unfortunate incident!" Is life itself not an unfortunate incident unduly prolonged? Even into the placid lives of jolly Dutchmen the evil genius of Mata Hari brought disaster and grief. Yet another of her victims was the officer of the Russian Guard, Michaelovitch, who was a former student of the Dresden Polytechnic and who succumbed to this blackmail of the Berlin police through the instrumentality of Mata Hari. Later, he was shot for selling photographs of airplanes in the Hanriot plant to a Spaniard called Estrada, an agent of Major von Bulow, who controlled an espionage service from the chancellery in Berne.

Not all her entertainments were for the relatively innocuous purpose of collecting blackmailing evidence, which, by the way, proved so ineffective.

There were other occasions when men, entrusted with highly confidential missions, were received by Mata Hari and during the course of the entertainment she contrived to extract from their lips not only wine-scented kisses, but secrets which sent them into obscure German fortresses, from which they departed in complete ignorance of their betrayer. One of the cleverest officers of the French army staff, visiting Germany on an unofficial secret mission, was among the Red Dancer's victims. During a night of foolish indiscretion he confided his secret to her. The Berlin secret police had suspected the object of his visit and had deliberately turned him over to their invaluable tool, who successfully executed the work entrusted to her. The unhappy officer went insane during his imprisonment when he realized the extent of his folly.

The great majority of the highly-coloured adventures attributed to Mata Hari in this house of secret panels, revolving mirrors, and tapped telephone wires have no semblance of truth, but one incident is worth recalling, since it illustrates the extraordinary workings of these secret police. For obvious reasons names are withheld.

The incident happened during the negotiations between France and Russia before the war. At that time the combined secret police of those countries maintained a headquarters in Germany, which, in addition to gathering information, had to protect the couriers bearing important messages and documents. On this occasion a Russian courier bearing the draft of a secret treaty was announced to pass through Berlin on his way to Paris, *via* Brussels, and the agents were warned to give him every protection, since it was imperative that the treaty should not prematurely be divulged.

On arrival in Berlin the courier went directly to the Embassy and deposited his diplomatic pouch in a special safe in the Embassy. Now, it was known to the Russian officials that this safe had a leak in it somewhere through which information of its contents filtered. The secret watchers, therefore, had a double problem to face which perplexed them. Either their government, knowing how insecure the hiding-place was, wished, for their own purpose, to allow the German authorities to know what was in the pouch, or it was the duty of the watchers to guard the safe rigorously in order to prevent the individual who made illicit use of it from inspecting the highly confidential document deposited in it. Either line of argument led away from the courier, who retained the draft treaty in his possession, secreted on his person.

As it was desired to allow this officer to proceed without attracting attention to his movements, he had been instructed to travel leisurely, and it was his intention to spend a few days in Berlin, where he had many acquaintances among the officers of the garrison. He made directly for the Adlon Hotel, a noted hostelry for officers of all nations who chanced to be in the Prussian capital. His German acquaintances were glad to have the opportunity of entertaining their rare visitor, and he was assured that they would make his visit memorable. Mata Hari was sent for to make up the party, and they proceeded to enjoy what the capital had to offer in the way of amusement.

At Mata Hari's suggestion they all adjourned to her apartment, where she promised to furnish entertainment such as no cabaret could supply, and which, being private, would allow them to act with greater freedom and incur less subsequent gossip. Before the time for dinner had arrived the courier had sent to the railroad station for his baggage and had it brought to Mata Hari's apartment. He was assigned as valet one of the police agents who brought his baggage from the station. As soon as the courier went to his room to dress for dinner the valet begged for a pen to enter some details on a baggage receipt which he produced.

The courier hesitated for a moment but after some little difficulty in withdrawing it from his pocket lent the fountain pen he carried to the man. As the servant was writing at the dressing-table he saw in the mirror that the courier kept him covered with a pistol concealed under his jacket. The courier at this stage was fully awake to his danger.

Now, the valet returned *a* pen, not *the* pen he had borrowed from the Russian, but the movement was made so innocently that the latter merely glanced at the pen to be sure it was his before restoring it to his pocket. Without question he also pocketed the receipt. When he awakened next morning his room was in wild disorder, but since he felt as if a hive of bees and the combined bands of the Guards Division had taken up residence inside his head, the condition of his discarded clothing was not surprising. He only retained vague recollections of the earlier stages of the previous night's debauch, while its termination was a complete blank. The one thing which most concerned him was the safety of his fountain pen. It was still intact. But the unwise guest had a sudden access of virtue and the recollection of his duty which determined him to leave Berlin without delay. Meanwhile, the wildly perplexed German secret police were frantically scouring the city for the draft of the secret treaty which they had been informed by friends in St. Petersburg was carried by this courier. They had photographs of all his other papers, but none bore the slightest resemblance to the missing document.

The still blissful Russian was kept under constant surveillance as far as Aix-la-Chapelle, where the German agents finally gave up their job in the belief that this man was not the messenger they sought. Once across the Belgian border, the courier heaved a sigh of relief; the hunt must be reduced to one or two men now; but, he reflected, if that night of unconsciousness had exposed him to the utmost risk without his secret being betrayed, these few men who continued to watch him could be circumvented by his more discreet behaviour. He avoided all the pitfalls of the delightful Belgian capital and spent the time in *bourgeoise* simplicity. On the second night he was returning from the Théâtre de la Monnaie when the valet who had attended him in Berlin suddenly stepped out of the darkness with his hand extended.

"Monsieur, it has been a long chase, but at last I have succeeded in overtaking you. When I borrowed your pen the other night I had the misfortune to confuse it with my own, and I now beg you to make an exchange which will restore the pens to their rightful owners."

He offered a fountain pen of identically the same make as that which the courier drew from his pocket. The language the horrified man used was appropriate to the occasion.

"It is useless to argue, monsieur. This is your pen. If you will take the trouble to examine the bottom you will find your draft treaty intact and I can give you the positive assurance that its terms are unknown to the German authorities."

"But . . . but you are, then, one of their secret police?" stammered the astonished Russian.

"I was, monsieur, until this morning. I have resigned without taking the trouble to send my resignation through the usual channels. Probably it will not be necessary now."

Careful examination of the pen proved it to be the original containing the treaty, written on thin rice paper and cunningly concealed in the tube. If the terms of the treaty were unknown to the German officials they must have been acceptable to still another power, for no protest ever came from the nation whose secret agent had protected the draft during the Russian's drunken sleep and who had been able to photograph it for the benefit of his own employers while making a pretence of searching for it for the Berlin authorities.

It is not often that any country succeeds in placing its agents in the secret police of another, but they had been able to do so in this case.

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Chapter Seven

USEFUL AS HER ACTIVITIES IN BERLIN WERE, Mata Hari was only serving her novitiate for the more important work she was to undertake abroad. The main object of her Berlin employment was to get her so deeply involved in the intricate web of Machiavellian intrigue that withdrawal was impossible without the risk of being denounced to those countries whose agents had been the victims of her fatal power of fascination. Once engaged in this dangerous pastime there is very little opportunity to withdraw should the agent's services still be useful. Denunciation was a favourite trick of punishment for recalcitrant spies. The case of Karl Graves has already been mentioned in this respect, and the French assert that they have conclusive proof that no less than fourteen of "Mlle. Doktor's" agents were exposed to them by that lady herself, either because they had ceased to be useful to her or because they required disciplining.

Having caught her wings in the web of police intrigue, Mata Hari was sent, sometime about 1910, to Lorrach, in Bavaria, where the authorities conducted a regular spies' "academy." Here she received a finishing course in the delicate art. During the war much of the spy's training had to be of a hasty and improvised character, but before the war the German spy schools enjoyed a sinister reputation because of their thoroughness in instruction, the exacting discipline, and the harsh punishments inflicted on the graduates who blundered. In the latter case officers who made mistakes were sent for a period of imprisonment in the grim fortresses of Königsberg and Spandau. During the war no effort was made to inflict minor punishments. Unsatisfactory spies were simply sent on an unimportant errand and then betrayed by intentional indiscretion to the enemy and left to stew in their own juice.

The training in these schools was mostly restricted to the Intelligence departments of the army and navy; the men of the Personal Corps (under the control of the Foreign Office) rarely sent their men to them except for special training. Until the war made the necessity of employing neutrals desirable the students at the spy academy were usually recruited from selected groups of army and navy reservists possessing the necessary personal qualifications for the work. If one wishes to understand how so many of the hastily recruited war spies proved unequal to the tasks imposed upon them, one needs to know only what qualifications were sought in the men who were to be trained technically for espionage. It is a formidable array. The recruit had to possess the natural qualifications of discretion, tact, courage, patience, quick wit, keen intellect, resource, imagination, industry, intuition, and—an easy conscience. When these qualities were found in a man, he was then instructed in the requisite specialized knowledge.

That espionage was considered an honourable calling is shown by the high rank of some of the men who engaged in it. The hall porter at the popular Hôtel des Indes at The Hague, during wartime, was the brother of the Baron von Wangenheim, ambassador to Turkey; the chief spy in Vienna in 1914 was Prince Kraft zu Hohenlohe Ingelfingen, and a famous resident spy in Paris was the son of Prince Ratibor, ambassador to Spain. None the less, the heads of the German secret service repeatedly employed international crooks to secure information which could not otherwise be obtained.

At Lorrach the pupils were given instruction in such essential details as the use of codes and ciphers, methods of passing on information, etc. Added to this was certain highly technical knowledge, such as the measuring of heights and distances, the calculation of angles, and the description of topographical features. In 1914, just before the war, a German agent operating in England, working without instruments (which would have attracted attention), but simply by pacing distances and calculating heights, got a very accurate picture of the dimensions of a new bridge of considerable strategic importance. His account of this bridge, its capacity, strength, use, and resistance to explosives was surprisingly complete. Such knowledge is often of primary importance, as, for instance, in America during the early stages of the war, when confidential information was of less value than the destruction of material which was intended for Allied use.

Then there were the subtle mannerisms and national traits which the spy had to study. These formed a very difficult part of the curriculum, because usually the idiosyncrasies which lead to betrayal are of such trifling nature that they are difficult to detect. During the war one very skilled Allied agent was trapped through an amazingly small detail. He was travelling as a duly accredited representative of an established Berlin commercial house. Lunching one day in Munich, he casually murmured, "Thank you," each time the waitress served him with a fresh dish. This trifling courtesy made the waitress suspicious that he was not what he pretended to be, because German salesmen do not usually bestow such courtesy upon unprepossessing waitresses. She reported her suspicions to the police, and their investigations justified them in arresting the agent. To this day French agents are cautioned against displaying their national politeness while operating in certain countries.

It was in these details that the war-time instruction failed woefully. Some of the spies betrayed themselves by sheer stupidity in their guile. There was the ingenious gentleman (or was it a lady?) who had been accustomed to send secret information from behind the Allied lines in Flanders by means of pigeons. Discovering that orders had been issued that all pigeons were to be shot, this imaginative spy was nonplussed until he hit upon the happy idea of disguising a pigeon as a parrot in order to make it inconspicuous. An inconspicuous parrot in Flanders!

The French records show that no less than three spies were betrayed by their inability to pronounce the "v" in *vingt*. Such a deficiency would have been remedied in peace-time training.

Mata Hari was by no means the only woman trained at Lorrach. When she went there, a training method had already been devised for women. Unlike other nations who rarely employ women when men are available, Germany has a predilection for women spies. One woman (who incidentally was director of spy-training at one time) has become a figure of fable in spy annals, and as she was director of the Zone of Interior, and thus Mata Hari's chief during the war, her picture is worth studying.

This woman's identity has been enshrouded in mystery even to her own colleagues. Known to the British as Frau von Heinrichsen and to the French as Mlle. Doktor, she inspired respect as a terribly dangerous opponent in her enemies and a terrible fear in her subordinates. Of all the women who were employed in the dangerous game during the war, none rose to such spectacular heights as the blond demon who directed the Zone of Interior from Antwerp. The dashing Mata Hari may have surrounded herself with a more resplendent aura of romance; Louise de Bettignies, the sweet-faced aristocrat who peddled laces while organizing the British secret service in Belgium and died of typhus in a German prison, may be better entitled to the title of martyr for her country; the pretty Marussia Destrelles may excite more pity; but the woman whom Colonel Nicholai (head of German espionage) called the "mistress of spies" holds undisputed rank among the mightiest and most powerful.

Before being engulfed in the anonymity which obscures the secret-service agent she was Maria Ann Lesser, daughter of a prosperous fine-art dealer in Berlin whose reputation extended beyond the limits of his own country. His was a well-known figure at Christie's and the Hôtel Drouot. At school Maria showed that she was possessed of a superior intelligence, with a decided flair for languages, which her father decided to develope by taking the girl with him on his trips abroad, so that she might perfect her accent. One of these business trips took Herr Lesser to St. Petersburg, where he was negotiating for the sale of pictures. The outcome of this journey had a more lasting effect upon secret-service technique than it had upon the fine arts, for it led to Maria's introduction to the art of spying.

Maria Lesser's claims to beauty have been disputed. Many people have firmly advanced the claim that she was possessed of great physical attractions, but the only time I ever saw her she was little better than a besotted drab without any attractiveness and nothing noteworthy except a pair of uncommonly keen eyes which were not altogether pleasant. A German officer, who had served under her and showed no other spark of kindliness for his former chief, described her to me as having that special type of blond beauty which appeals to the Teuton mind—blond, with regular features, rich red lips, a pink-and-white complexion, and dark eyes. At the time of her first visit to St. Petersburg, when she was only seventeen, it is conceded that Maria was a very attractive girl. This seems to be proved by her popularity and her subsequent success over two sophisticated men.

One of these was the military *attaché,* a dashing Prussian cavalryman, who completely turned Maria's head, and when Herr Lesser returned to Berlin, Maria remained behind with her soldier lover. In the little apartment which they occupied, the proud and happy girl so gained the admiration of her lover that he confided to her some of his official worries. The Russian artillery were being issued a new gun, and the German authorities were clamouring for a description of the weapon, but the Russians had shown a disinclination to be obliging (a new trait in that easy-going and corrupt bureaucracy, accustomed to supplying, for a price, anything the Germans wanted). In order to satisfy the demands of the home authorities Maria's lover displayed a fine magnanimity. He loaned Maria to a Russian officer who was willing to pay for the girl's favours by indiscreetly revealing all that her lover wished to know about the new gun.

This action of betraying a girl and then luring her into the secret service has become a familiar part of the technique of so many German spies. The story of espionage is full of similar cases. In the case of Maria Ann Lesser her lover saw that she had the making of a superior secret agent, so he sent her to Abteilung III with the recommendation that she be trained for Intelligence work. There may have been a private clause in the recommendation, for the officer to whom it was addressed took the girl under his own protection. Together they visited the Italian manœuvres, where Maria Lesser probably first met Mata Hari, who also was attending this military exercise under royal protection.

Maria Lesser was trained at Lorrach and then entrusted with independent missions which were accomplished with the touch of a master hand. She was then recalled to the training-school, where she instructed the students. Drawing upon her own experience, Maria taught her women pupils that, while spying was a game in which they would get no credit if they were successful and no mercy if they failed, it had its own recompense. She warned them that it demanded every sacrifice, even to death; that it was a rough-and-tumble game in which virtue was a bagatelle of value only as a stake to gain their end.

"If you are not over-scrupulous," she said, "if you love adventure, a spy's life is filled with interest."

When war was declared Maria Lesser had to receive recognition for her brilliant qualities. She was made director of espionage over the areas behind the forward zones, with headquarters at Antwerp. Her territory included England and that part of France not occupied by the advanced troops. In this work her energy was unbelievable. She had to overcome the natural repugnance of officers, even high officers, receiving orders and instructions from a woman, and to acquire their respect she made use of ruthless measures. Twice her agents sent reports of the tanks while they were still a closely guarded secret. Maria Lesser sent these reports to an ordnance expert who regarded them as fantastic and absurd, the kind of bogey a silly woman would conjure up to annoy busy men. But when the time came that the tanks became an unpleasant reality Maria had her reply ready. She sent copies of her reports, with the expert's contemptuous comments on the margins, and an automatic pistol to the unhappy man who had ignored her warnings. He took the hint and blew out his brains rather than endure a woman's contempt.

There was also the case of Joseph Marks. This poor fellow was arrested several times on trumped-up charges of treachery which he always managed to disprove. But at last Maria Lesser told him that if he wished to prove his loyalty he must undertake a mission to England to ascertain some naval information required by her department. Poor Marks was too scared to refuse and too scared to act. He even failed to pass the first barrier, and when arrested expressed his profound gratitude to the English police for sending him to prison, where he was at least safe from "that terrible woman."

Most tragic of all was the case of a daring young Belgian belonging to that amazing organization of Belgian patriots who maintained an efficient system of counter-espionage throughout the entire war. This man succeeded in obtaining Maria Lesser's confidence and eventually became her intimate assistant. He was thus able to confound much of Maria's scheming until his zeal and devotion proved his undoing. A very highly trusted spy was dispatched to France on a more than usually delicate mission, entailing much careful preparation. He was arrested instantly on arrival. Two days later Maria received news that her trusted agent had been seized. She sent for her Belgian subordinate and informed him that there were only two persons in the world who had known the man was a spy—she and her assistant. The spy had been betrayed and one of them had done it, one of those two must suffer. She calmly drew an automatic out of the drawer of her desk and killed her subordinate.

In Antwerp she was established in a sumptuous suite of rooms, where she interviewed her agents when they were ready to undertake the missions to which she allotted them. In Major Massard's *Espionnes de Paris* there is an account of such an interview which merits quotation because of the side-light it throws on her character. Arrived in her office, the agent was subjected to a careful scrutiny and then to a long and searching examination as to his qualifications. Finally Maria addressed him:

"You are a resourceful young man, qualified to give a good account of yourself in an emergency. You have a superior education and can speak several languages. That is very good so far as it goes, but it is not enough. You must be alert, adaptable, obedient, brave, and audacious. Do you possess those qualities? I am a student of physiognomy and I believe you do. You will experience many difficulties in this profession, but before long you will find it absorbing. If you are not one who pays too much attention to unnecessary scruples and who likes adventure you will find the life highly interesting. It is so with me. I would not surrender my position to fill a throne, because it furnishes me with all the mental satisfaction I could wish for; it enables me to deal on equal footing with men of the highest rank.

"I have one essential recommendation to make concerning your conduct. Be sober, chaste, and keep good hours. It is in the early hours of morning and the late hours of night that one's movements are most easily observed. Go to places of pleasure if you wish, but avoid entangling alliances, because, remember, every country employs counter-spies, and the most dangerous of all are the women one meets in those places. Let me remind you of your instructions. Be most circumspect in your schemes. Organize every step in your journeys with the greatest care for detail. Miss nothing in your study of the character and resources of the people you encounter, and everywhere you go print in your memory a picture of the place. As you have been advised, train your memory so that you do not have to take notes, put as little as possible into writing, and in all your messages use only the code we have given you. Finally, destroy everything you receive from us as soon as you have read it."

At the conclusion of the war the German authorities had no further use for Maria's services. Her former colleagues and chiefs were superseded in power. The Socialists who had seized power in the country had too often been under her baleful supervision to have any affection for her. But spying was in her blood, she could not surrender its hold, and she was terribly embittered by her treatment. For Maria had deserved well of her country. Twice during the hardest times of war she penetrated the British counter-espionage barriers and visited London, walking repeatedly along Pall Mall, past the service clubs where her enemies took their ease, when they had any. Therefore, she had to remain a spy, although she had now inherited a comfortable fortune through the death of her father.

But what was probably the deciding factor in Maria's latest service was her weakness for drugs. By the time the war was over she had become the slave of narcotics. One of her former enemies offered to ensure a supply of her favourite drug if she would undertake espionage work for him, and that is how I came to see Maria Ann Lesser sinking into a drugged sleep in the headquarters of one of the armies of occupation on the Rhine. Since then she has ceased to be of value to any power. If she still lives it is in an asylum in Switzerland where drug addicts dream their last.

Maria Ann Lesser was Mata Hari's chief; not her immediate chief—that was Major Specht in Amsterdam. The pair worked together until the French counter-espionage service broke up the alliance between the two most terrible women spies of history, and Mata Hari owed much of her training to the other woman.

After her graduation from Lorrach, Mata Hari had to be restored to her position as a vaudeville "star" and equipped to resume her position as a courtesan, so that she might exercise her newly developed talent. With official assistance she embarked on what was to be the existence of a super-spy, probably the most accomplished and dangerous spy of the century. Those who met her at this time were surprised to find that she was doing her utmost to obliterate all traces of her Paris associations in the cultivation of Teutonic airs and manners. A visitor to Naples remarked at the time, after having talked with her in that city during 1907 (before her enrollment in the secret service), that she was threatening to renounce the cult of her favourite god, Siva, and to become a good Berlinoise, speaking German with an exaggerated accent. But she could never altogether renounce Paris: she returns to it again and again, and as the years go by she comes back to it as a spy. But now her relations with the high aristocracy of Germany have made her ambitious of social rank; she begins to sign her letters "Lady MacLeod." Any of her noble admirers might have informed her that this form of signature betrayed her lack of title to it. It was a confession of ignorance. Her posthumous admirers have tried to establish her right to the title by marriage, but Campbell MacLeod neither inherited nor acquired a title.

She continued to travel from one city to another. She became a familiar figure at army manœuvres, where she was invariably the cherished companion of some highly-placed officer, her purpose unsuspected because of her notoriety. Scarcely any capital of Europe escaped her poisonous presence. Like her favourite reptile, the serpent, the slime of her writhing body coiled from one city to another, leaving its track of debauchery and treacherous betrayal. One of her romantic biographers has placed on her lips a terrible commentary on her success.

> At the moment I am a queen with my courtiers. . . . Ginoceli, with his hyena's snout and his swindler's mien, will never miss seeing me for a day, even if I was in hell. And Crevard, the millionaire, who sets a price on everything, would sell his God if he could find a buyer. . . . And Baron Clavenmoor, as puritanical outside as he is licentious within. . . . Bah, their jewels and their flowers weary me. Beauty carries with it a curse. Men are vile! They who adore me would devour each other for my smiles. The Grand Duke Basil is transformed into a Nero when he is drunk—disgusting. And the Kaiser's friend, General von Zwanzig, former general of the Guard, one has but to see him eat to know what manner of man he is.[1]

It is not a pretty picture, but it is Mata Hari. And it pleases this excellent writer to place her in the position of complaining that flattery sickened her, that the hot caresses of these monsters froze her, as part of the character she was playing. Yet Mata Hari never tried to avoid them. She hunted them, pursued them without ceasing, and there were few men whom she chose to make her victims who tried to resist the modern Circe.

Some of those who knew Mata Hari most intimately have declared that from the beginning of her career she had the presentiment that her life was to be a tissue of magic and unpredictable events. At the apogee of her career, when she had at her feet men of power, influence, and wealth from all parts of Europe, it would seem that her dream of being the idol on some strange altar had been realized. Her progress from one engagement to another was a triumphal procession over a flower-carpeted path, her state was very nearly regal, for princes met in her rooms, and ambassadors forgot their cares when she offered them consolation in forgetfulness. And yet there was an occult warning of destiny which menaced her with black anguish, a vague fear of obscure events which overcast the future. To her most cherished friend of the period she wrote: "Protect me from so many things which may do me evil and which tempt me from a desire to work."

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[1] *La chèvre aux pieds d'or,* by Chas. H. Hirsch. Paris.

Of her first steps in the practice of espionage very little is known, since their exponent is dead and the German authorities have good and sufficient reason to be and to remain reticent. We must pass over some years while the twinkling feet of the Red Dancer carry the lovely body toward Paris on her final phase, *Nach Paris*. These two words have become synonymous with German Nemesis.

The first of her known spy activities show that she was employed upon the extensive scheme in which high finance and low morality each had their part, one of Germany's most expensive failures. It is now a well-known fact that the Berlin authorities made a vigorous effort to control and direct a substantial current of public opinion in France through the daily press. The familiar story has been exposed in the prosecution of Caillaux, Humbert, Almeyreda, Bolo, and Malvy, charged with complicity in the effort to purchase influential journals with German capital for the purpose of spreading Germanophile ideas. Mata Hari played an inconspicuous part in the intrigue from its inception. In 1912, when she was on one of her visits to Paris, Mata Hari made strenuous efforts to learn something of the inner workings of Parisian journalism, what journals were in need of financing, where pressure could be applied to obtain financial control, and to ascertain what were the Berlin sources of information. In this rôle she was completely overshadowed by her colleague, Almeyreda, for, while he succeeded in reaching the font of policy, Mata Hari lingered with the journalists themselves. This was the more flattering to her vanity, since the cultivation of journalistic friendships produced favourable notices in the press, but it was not particularly useful to her employers because the editorial-writers do not frame policies and have nothing to do with the control of the journals which they help to produce.

In one respect alone was she really successful. She did learn the names of the Berlin correspondents whom it was hoped to influence at times of international storm and stress so that German ideas would be favourably exposed before the French public. Unprejudiced comment was not welcomed in the tortuous policies which Germany employed in the anxious years which preceded the war. If the Berlin correspondents failed to respond to the official overtures, the blame cannot be laid on Mata Hari, who had done her duty in revealing the men who should have been influenced.

An interesting reminiscence of her methods at the time is given by a French journalist, one of the men whom she invited, unsuccessfully in this case, to furnish her with information. He recalls being invited in the year 1913 to her villa at Neuilly, which was surrounded by a high wall to prevent prying eyes from witnessing the dances without costume in the moonlight, which the dancer informed him she used to perform for the benefit of her guests. This portion of her story was verified; the rest was not. She explained that she was waiting for a divorce from her husband. One day she

[illegible] COLLEGE LIBRARY
SAN RAFAEL, CALIFORNIA

appeared at the rooms of the journalist with tears running down her cheeks. She told a pitiful story of having been beaten by her husband, and to prove her words exhibited bare flesh on which were several horrible bruises. The writer advised her to see a lawyer friend of his who would be able to provide her with professional advice, but he positively refused to have anything to do with her attempt to cultivate pity as a means of being admitted to the secrets of the press. He was suspicious of her motives, knew that she had not been in communication with her former husband, and, besides, could see that the bruises on her body were the result of art and not brutality. It was no surprise to him when he learned that she made no effort to see the lawyer.

So little did the Germans trust their spies that each one was placed under the unseen supervision of a more trusted agent, who in turn had his supervisor. In this way the slightest deviation from the strict path of duty was followed by denunciation to the authorities against whom they were operating. One cannot take risks with a spy inclined to treachery. Mata Hari was placed under the willing charge of a German nobleman, who, while ostensibly her "protector," provided her with an expensive villa in Neuilly, the fashionable suburb of Paris, where she soon began to collect her friends. At first there was no effort to conceal the relations between the baron and his friend, but when his purpose was served and Mata Hari had established more advantageous relations with French officials, the German nobleman moved out of the picture; it was emphatically not part of his duties to monopolize the favours of the spy.

Again let us glance at the methods of the German secret service to appreciate why Mata Hari was encouraged to practise her profession as a courtesan. At first thought it would appear that a spy's duty is to be as inconspicuous as possible and to avoid any entanglement which would attract suspicion, rather than to court the full glare of publicity. This is the argument of the unsophisticated. Most of the successful spies, the super-spies, have all occupied positions which brought them much before the public. Witness the example of Trebitsch Lincoln, who served as a member of the British Parliament while in the pay of the German secret service.

Contrary to belief, a spy's main difficulty is not in finding out things, but in forwarding the information he has collected. Anyone who has the average five senses can exercise them in obtaining the required information with very little attendant

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danger; the risk of exposure comes in transmitting it. Should the spy, however, make a false move and arouse suspicion, it is imperative to have a well-grounded and perfectly-rehearsed alibi. And it must not be too innocent. The prearranged excuse should have a convincing reason for furtive movements and suspicious efforts to avoid surveillance.

The majority of the lesser spies sent out by Germany during the war were furnished in advance with the most singular excuses, rehearsed so that when produced to meet the occasion they would divert suspicion from the graver charge of espionage. Usually they were furnished with some article of German or Austrian manufacture or origin which was contraband. Narcotics were a favourite camouflage. If a spy carrying cocaine, heroin, or morphine were arrested on suspicion of spying he had an excellent excuse ready for his desire to avoid the authorities.

"I am a smuggler, not a spy."

That expression became so familiar to the counter-espionage agent during the war that smuggling became almost synonymous with spying. But it was an infinitely better protection than the idiotic occupation assumed by some of the spies who operated in England. There, they insisted upon being cigar salesmen in a country where a cigar is a luxury and where an order on Amsterdam demanding 20,000 Coronas to be forwarded to Dover, where not more than 2,000 are smoked in one year, was a certain signal for an exodus of Scotland Yard men on the track of this super-salesman. The war years were the boom years for the cigar trade in England, but very few orders were executed. They were similarly the years when more drugs were imported into France than ever were consumed.

At first the narcotic pedlars in France managed to slip past the vigilance of the Second Bureau, for the simple reason that they were pounced upon by the civil police and sent to serve prison terms before the secret service even knew of their existence. The usual parcel carried by the spy was a kilo (two pounds) of drug, which made their capture a cause for congratulations by the police. Alas! one of the spies went into his adopted trade too seriously and, having disposed of his genuine drug before capture, had to substitute some ground rice-flour for it. When the drug, which was his excuse for avoiding the police regulations, came to be examined and was found to lack pharmaceutical properties, the fat was in the fire. A man did not have to apologize for carrying and trying to sell rice-flour.

This digression will explain why Mata Hari continued to follow her public profession as a courtesan in order to fulfil the requirements as a spy. The Amsterdam authorities stoutly maintained the cigar-selling myth, although it immediately betrayed the pseudo-salesmen. In Mata Hari's case, however, it served a much better purpose to have an illicit occupation, since it brought her into direct relations with public men in a way which made investigation a matter of great delicacy.

Even when she did come under suspicion, her rôle enabled her to escape detection time after time, to the intense annoyance of the Second Bureau, who were convinced of her guilt long before they could secure the material evidence which made a conviction reasonably certain.

Chapter Eight

ON THE DAY WHEN WAR WAS DECLARED BETWEEN Germany and France Mata Hari was in Berlin. She lunched at the famous Adlon with her friend, the chief of the secret police, and since the hotel was the favourite resort of high officials, who now became popular idols in the enthusiasm of war, Mata basked in the reflected glory of her illustrious protector. The excited throng, hungering for a sight of their national heroes, surged about the famous restaurant to catch a glimpse of the leaders who happened to be eating there that day. Every minute saw the waiting crowd increase in size and the cheering swell in volume. When the time came for Mata Hari to emerge the crowd was in its best humour and gave Herr von Jagow, the prominent police officer, a rousing reception as he departed with the lady on his arm. But not all the population of the capital crowded into the street before the Adlon. Other, not less enthusiastic, groups paraded the streets singing songs of war. For once the active restraint of the Berlin police was relaxed, they took holiday. So did their chief. In an official car he made a tour of the excited city for the amusement of his companion, whom he proudly exposed to the populace, and, incidentally, to the foreign agents, who did not miss this indiscretion.

Shortly after this occurrence Abteilung III began to have an uneasy suspicion that all was not well with their organization in Britain. For years the English people had grumbled in impotent anger against an indifferent police who permitted German agents to work unmolested in that country. Responsible officials received complaints of audacious spies with an airy disregard which amounted to a cynical indifference for the safety of the realm, much to the indignation of certain well-meaning people who missed no opportunity to draw attention to the alarming danger accompanying this apparent neglect. It was notorious that there was a considerable body of active spies operating with impunity in England. Yet as the first anxious days went by the Berlin authorities became aware of a paralyzing lethargy which had descended upon their agents. There was an absence of information relating to the mobilization of British troops and their departure for France. It had been taken for granted that the invasion of Belgium would cause these troops to be landed at one of the northern channel ports and would be attended with considerable risk if the right wing of the invading army moved expeditiously enough. The places of the anticipated landing were watched carefully without any sign of the expected enemy. As he approached these ports von Kluck threw out a cavalry corps to check any advance from that direction, but no sooner had his cavalry got into movement than the main German advance came up against a surprising enemy—British troops.

The Germans had guessed wrong.

Modern miracles in military strategy are frequently no more than the logical deductions from fragments of information furnished by spies, filtered through the special knowledge of the Intelligence officers and supplied to the high command for guidance. In this case the German Intelligence service did not have any secret source of supply to assist in the performance of miracles. Their long-established source had, in fact, miraculously dried up through the totally unexpected intervention of the notoriously complacent London police.

During the night which succeeded Sir Edward Grey's announcement of Britain's intention to support her engagements to the extent of going to war, Scotland Yard had been fingering over its files, furbishing up its memories, and visiting its

German acquaintances. Some time previously, when the Emperor William had last visited Buckingham Palace, he was accompanied by certain high officials, one of whom left the Palace to visit a barber in an obscure district. The mere fact that an important German official should make this strange visit puzzled the police because there is little in common between Buckingham Palace and the Caledonian Road. The statesman's host proved to be a barber called Ernst, technically an Englishman by birth, but German by parentage. The police watched the barber very carefully for some time and found that he was the German Foreign Office's "letter-box." That is to say, he received from Berlin a bundle of letters with English stamps already affixed, which he distributed among various post offices in the city. These letters were instructions to spies.

Incidentally, Ernst was paid £1 (or $5) a month for his services.

Through this discovery the British authorities were able to ascertain all the spies employed by the Foreign Office, work out the cipher used, and read all the instructions. When the time for action arrived all the British police had to do was to visit the addresses of these agents and put them under lock and key. One, and one only, escaped. The entire system of German espionage in England was in eclipse.

Suppose a similar *coup* had been achieved in France!

Nothing but the most fortuitous circumstances prevented the German spy system in France from failing as completely as did their British system. Only a stroke of fortune which they had no right to expect saved them. The Second Bureau of the War Department, which is the nerve centre of the army and responsible for counter-espionage in France, followed the example of their Allies and drew up a list of undesirable aliens, which was presented to the civil police for action. The Minister of the Interior, who was head of the civil police, refused to have these potential and actual spies arrested.

It has been asserted repeatedly that this Minister (M. Malvy) was one of Mata Hari's victims. He has been charged with criminal co-operation in her defence and was actually exiled because of his neglect of the most elementary precautions at a moment of national crisis. Let us hasten to say that we do not attribute any treacherous intention to the Minister. He shared with another Minister (Messimy, at the War Department) the extraordinary distinction of possessing a name which began with M and ended with Y, and it has been said that letters bearing the signature of MY which were found in Mata Hari's apartment formed part of the evidence wrongfully attributed to prove his guilt. This is wrong. At Mata Hari's trial some letters were read which left no doubt about the writer; it was Messimy, and the mention of his unpopular name was received with unconcealed glee among the younger officers who had little cause to like him. It may further be added that these letters contained nothing which could have condemned anyone except, probably, in a breach-of-promise action. Having exculpated M. Malvy of any criminal relation with the spy, we cannot, however, entirely discharge him of all responsibility for aiding her.

If Mata Hari never was the accepted mistress of M. Malvy, there was a very well-founded suspicion that Mlle. Nery Beryll was, and the two women were intimate friends. It was through this intimacy that Mata Hari was able to secure privileges which secured for her the reputation of the most dangerous spy discovered during the war. But she must not be charged with having prevented the arrest of the undesirables at the beginning of the war. Credit for that accomplishment belongs to Almeyreda. Had M. Malvy ever taken the trouble to arrange the names on this sinister list in alphabetical order, he would have found that of his friend Almeyreda at the head. Yet this man actually persuaded the Minister that it would be bad policy to arrest these foreigners because it would cause a panic in France. It was a piece of superb effrontery and saved the entire German spy system operating in France. It was a piece of good fortune which must have created exquisite delight in Berlin, but for the unhappy Second Bureau it was only a foretaste of the intense difficulties under which they had to work until the entire Ministry of obstruction was cleared out.

The position of these spies appeared to be founded upon such an intricate web of intrigue, involving men of the highest position, that, after this good opening, to expose one or two agents would mean the almost inconceivable participation of public functionaries in an anti-national conspiracy. It is not suggested that all those who subsequently suffered prosecution—men like Caillaux, Humbert, and Malvy—were actually in the pay of the German authorities or were actually aware that they were tools of the Berliners. But if their acts were not criminal in the accepted sense of the word, their ready acceptance of friendship with less innocent people like Almeyreda and Bolo, their indifference to treacherous intrigue, and their rejection of advice from the secret police, rendered them not unworthy of the active hatred of those who placed power in their hands. When it is recalled that, forty years before, Germany had placed the Prussian Baroness von Kaula in a position where she gained the confidence of the War Minister in Paris, the least that might have been expected of contemporary French statesmen was to guard against a repetition of the betrayal.

Even with their agents so well placed that an exposure would have resulted in a revelation of political shallowness and corruption which would have shaken the French nation to its very foundations, the German secret service had not entirely covered the field of their activities. There was an urgent need for current military information to supplement the work of the terrorists and defeatists, and Mata Hari was the spy best qualified to obtain it.

It never was an easy matter for neutrals to pass from one belligerent country to another during the war. Harassed police agents at the frontiers and ports of entry suspected everyone, demanding absolute proof from all travellers that their journey was of a wholly innocent nature. To elude the vigilance of these officials the German secret service had organized a highly efficient forgery department whose duty it was to produce at short notice all the necessary proofs of identity required to enable a neutral to circulate freely among the nations at war. In Mata Hari's case no forged papers were necessary. She was a neutral, a distinguished dancer of established reputation with many influential friends who were able to smooth over many difficulties which beset the less fortunate traveller. But even so a very good reason had to be furnished for her desire to visit Paris, so to the French representatives in Holland she offered the plausible excuse that she wished to dispose of her property at Neuilly. This satisfied them when the application was supported by the head of the Dutch Cabinet and by powerful French officials, and Mata Hari was granted the papers necessary for her journey to Paris.

The head of the German secret service provided her with 30,000 marks (at that time $7,500) for her expenses. Unfortunately, this financial transaction was made known to the English Intelligence Department, who passed on their information to the Second Bureau in Paris as soon as it was known that the French capital was her destination. At a later date Mata Hari had an uneasy moment when she was taxed with receiving this payment and asked for an explanation. She treated her questioner with disdain and the question with a lack of gravity which only equalled her want of modesty.

"It is true that I received 30,000 marks from my friend who is head of the espionage department but it was not the salary of a spy. It was the price of my favours, for I was his mistress."

"Yes, we know of your intimate relations with the officer," was the unfeeling retort, "but he must have been unusually generous to treat you so liberally."

"Thirty thousand marks generous! That was my usual price. My lovers never offered me less."

Decidedly Mata Hari had her moments of pride, but there was a time when she had to admit that the same officer paid for the same services with only half the amount.

As we have said, no sooner did Mata Hari arrive in London en route for Paris than the English warned their French allies of the spy's journey. It might be asked why they did not arrest her, knowing that she was a highly dangerous spy going into a friendly country to practise her treacherous calling.

The explanation is simple. A spy enjoys the customary privilege of being innocent until there is material proof of guilt. No one accused of spying can be punished by a court of law without the production of conclusive orthodox evidence, because, in the case of a foreigner, or more particularly of a neutral, the national representatives make energetic efforts to release them, so that in principle the freedom of movement of their nationals will not be restricted. Circumstantial evidence is worthless.

Substantial evidence was made more than ever necessary during the war, when German spies adopted the ruse of pleading guilty to secondary offences, such as smuggling, in order to avoid the major charge of spying, which might involve a death sentence. In the case of Mata Hari there was no direct evidence. She was known as a police "stool pigeon," not as an active agent either collecting or transmitting information, and for that reason the special branch of Scotland Yard was powerless to prevent her from proceeding on her journey. They could only hope that her liberty might induce her to make some false move which would betray either the mission she had been sent on or some of her fellow spies with whom she would come in contact. Their hopes were not realized, but for the moment she was courteously treated in order to prevent arousing any presentiment of the danger she was running, or any suggestion that the English authorities knew of her work.

Immediately she was installed in Paris, Mata Hari began to extend her circle of friends.

There was still the faithful band of old followers to whom she had awarded her favours in the past and could be of use to her yet on occasion. Among these were the permanent head of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, who had been her first lover in Paris and who retained an ardent passion for her to the bitter end, and General Messimy, the amiable if not too brilliant old soldier who held the important post of War Minister. These men and the sycophants who invariably hover about the presence of persons of influence would serve to provide her with a rich field from which to extract information as well as personal gain.

It was her liaison with the first mentioned of these officials that permitted Mata Hari to perform a feat which would enhance the joy and gratification of the most successful secret agent. Some of her reports to the espionage chiefs in Holland were written on the official notepaper of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, sure proof of her successful penetration into these exclusive official circles. But if these, and other, leaders of opinion were never judged to have been rather more than usually indiscreet, if no actual guilt was proved against them, surely Mata Hari's close intimacy with these men enabled her to benefit from the confidence of their subordinates, who, human nature being what it is, must have occasionally been coaxed or persuaded to reveal confidential knowledge to a woman who could predispose their chiefs in their favour.

When the London authorities obligingly "signalled" the approaching arrival of Mata Hari in Paris, she was taken under the closest surveillance of the Second Bureau; but the strictest scrutiny of her actions and correspondence failed to reveal any material evidence of her complicity in espionage. Certainly she was known to have friends among some of the women who also were known to act as carriers for their lovers employed in the German secret service in Spain and Switzerland, but it was found on most reliable authority that she was completely ignorant of this employment. It was only a similarity of social tastes which brought them together. Not only did Mata Hari resume her former standards of depraved morality which she called her pleasures, but she sank to lower depths of degradation than ever before.

Paris was throughout the war the Mecca of many a sorry pilgrimage for those who had faced the inferno of the advanced posts with its horror of death and mutilation, its filth and abomination, its monastic deprivations from the soft and endearing charms of gentle companions. It is futile to blame these men, whose eyes still carried the reflection of death, for their excesses. To be deprived of their womenfolk was one of the severest strains to which they were exposed; the loss of their charming restraints caused many a decent and healthy-minded man to seek gratification for the feeling of unbounded relief which Paris leave afforded in the smiles and enchantments of that mocking, laughing cherubim of hell. Who shall blame them? Did not St. Anthony try to solve the problem in his own way? And no one credits him with achieving any great happiness through his solution.

Mata Hari knew that in the dens of iniquity to which these foreign officers, and French officers, too, released from rigorous discipline and nervous strain, sought a temporary oblivion from their restraints, much valuable information could be obtained if one shared in the task of brightening the few days of leave and profited by the moments of intoxicated relaxation. The author of the standard work on the prostitution in Paris during the war mentions having encountered Mata Hari in several popular brothels frequented by soldiers on leave. In their efforts to purify her character some ardent admirers have protested against unguarded use of this statement because the medical man who makes it omits to mention whether she visited the establishments as a client or as an employee. Although we fail to appreciate the fine difference between the status of the two characters, let us say at once that we believe she went in the more dignified (if that is the word) character of client, frequenting the places for the express purpose of extracting from drunken soldiers information they would have sacrificed their tongues to have retained.

However, it is fairly certain that her visits were not without personal recompense and that she carried her worship of the god Siva into these hells, because the official investigator received several jealous complaints from other *habitués* of these houses that Mata Hari got more than her share of their trade. "The Hindu is a perfect devil," they angrily declared. At this time she was making other, more severe calls upon the assistance of Siva, the god of evil.

The information of Allied military affairs she gleaned did not all come from this tainted source. In point of fact, much of the material so gathered was inclined to be very deceiving unless substantiated, because the wild rumours which circulated where large groups of people were congregated only confused the issue, and in matters of military policy the officers who came down from the front line were the worst possible judges. But the circles round her Ministerial friends furnished the correctives. It can be acknowledged that whatever material Mata Hari collected, trustworthy or not, and dispatched to her chiefs in Holland, remained her own and their secret for many a month. The exasperating feature of her activities, from a counter-espionage point of view, was that they defied detection. The Second Bureau had cleverly introduced some of its ablest agents into the intimacy of her private life without being able to surprise her secret. They were convinced of her guilt, yet unable to expose it. And Heaven alone knows she was not idle.

Having obtained admission to France under the pretext of selling her Neuilly property, she could not afford to neglect this duty without arousing suspicion of her real mission. An amusing story arises from this task of selling her possessions, which shows that she still enjoyed making people's flesh creep with stories of her savage nature. Among her most cherished possessions in the villa was a valuable collection of Dresden china which had been accumulated through the efforts of various lovers to emulate each other in their generosity. As a collection it was of considerable interest, but as a readily realizable asset it was comparatively worthless, since no one was wishful to acquire such fragile property when Fokkers were destroying cathedrals of more substantial construction. Again her official friends came to her aid. There were the national collections with funds for the acquisition of such treasures.

Accordingly, Mata Hari was given an appointment with the curator of one of these institutions, a scholarly, cultured gentleman whose thoughts were remote from deeds of destruction. She explained the urgent need for disposing of her possessions so that she might return to Holland, and regretfully told how she had been compelled to part with things which were a part of her life. She had even been compelled to sell her stable, and this is a very significant fact, since ownership of a private carriage in those days was as much the hallmark of success as possession of a Rolls-Royce or a Hispano is to the light lady of today.

"However," she added with a sigh of regret, "I could not think of my dear pony Vichna falling into strange hands. This morning I killed him myself, thrusting a golden stiletto into his heart."

Still, the times were trying for a lady with such expensive tastes. So many former friends had been compelled to leave Paris to serve with their regiments, others no longer gave the voluptuous entertainments which were out of place in a society which was stricken with grief over personal losses and national danger. The very rooms where she had previously lounged in indolent languor were filled with the groans of wounded men. The cost of living was rising, too, so there remained no alternative but a new and wealthy companion who would be responsible for maintaining her in the style she desired. There was always the old friend in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and, through him, a considerable number of minor diplomatists who might be depended on for discreet entertainment. But a wealthy protector had to be found somewhere.

Major Massard tells of one candidate who had acquired great wealth in profits arising from trading in war materials. He aspired to a reputation as a *boulevardier,* but had not achieved his ambition, through lack of a mistress sufficiently notorious and beautiful to match his great possessions. This man cast admiring glances in Mata Hari's direction because she had the reputation of being the most extravagant woman in Paris and therefore designed to do him credit as a man of position and riches. As her own glance was ever charged with warm promises, the affair progressed so favourably that the infatuated man gave a splendid dinner in one of the most delightful and correspondingly expensive restaurants in the Bois, which had all the air of a wedding feast. The festivity was marked by all the luxury and ostentatious display of a wealthy man proudly displaying his conquest before his and her friends, and all went happily until the *maître d'hôtel* offered a box of expensive cigars to the host. With a gesture of disdain he waved them aside as worthy of the more delicate palates of his refined guests.

"I am provided with some excellent cigars," he said, drawing a case of five-cent Bocks from his pocket, "and they do not cost so much."

Mata Hari's disapproval was unconcealed. She was heard to remark to her other neighbour at the table:

"That crack smells of herring. The stingy old devil! I could never enter into relations with a creature like that."

The man was the gainer, however, for the abrupt rupture of their friendship spared him from suspicion of complicity in her intrigues which fell upon all her acquaintances of this time. The incident is characteristic of the luxury-saturated existence she loved and further supports her frequent assertions that she hated mean people and stingy actions. This was her excuse for the profligacy she habitually practised and for the showers of gold (provided by her generous male companions) which flowed from her. A freedom of giving, however ill-calculated it might be, passed with her for generosity and earned for her the affection of domestics, who benefited from her liberal bounty, and fulsome flattery from among her numerous worshippers.

At last the weary business of selling her property was satisfactorily completed and there was no further reason why she should not return to Holland, but she found a reason to prolong her stay that increased the alarm of the Second Bureau, which would gladly have seen her depart. Mata Hari announced that she had enrolled in the Red Cross and was instructed to report for duty at the hospital in Vittel, a town in the zone of the Chemin des Dames. There were excellent reasons why a suspected person should not be permitted to go there and the Second Bureau were resolved to do their utmost to prevent the journey. A glance at the military situation will explain this.

After the offensive in Artois in May and June of 1915 in which the advance had been faster than was planned, it was decided to profit by the lessons learned and to plan an extensive allied offensive in Champagne with a simultaneous attack in Artois. In order that the preparation for this great offensive might be masked French activity was transferred during the summer to the Vosges and the Argonne with the hope that the enemy might not learn where the actual attack was to be delivered.

It was considered that the French defensive system had been so perfected that the garrisons of quieter sectors could be reduced to a minimum, with a corresponding increase in the available reserves. New divisions had been formed and the troops intended for the attack were given methodical training. The situation looked favourable for the attainment of great objectives, which were to relieve the pressure on the eastern front and to effect a complete rupture of the German line so as to outflank it on the left, to the north of Rheims. The more optimistic officers of Joffre's staff believed that the powerful reinforcements and the increase in heavy artillery would furnish the French with the means of disengaging the entire western front, an object that was not unattainable at that stage of the war. With such optimism prevailing at army headquarters it was not surprising that the darkening of the national spirit should be lightened by a gleam of hope which peered wanly through the surrounding gloom. The attack was to be launched toward the end of September.

One of the three zones for the attack was in front of Vittel, so that all the bustling activity of preparation must go surging eastward through the small town which was the location of several stationary units such as hospitals and air squadrons. The little town would be bursting with the portents of an offensive. There is no element in military strategy so conducive to success as surprise. The Lord may be on the side of the big battalions, but if the weaker opponent is warned of his enemy's intentions the advantages of numbers are offset by the state of preparedness he will encounter.

Before air-photography of positions had become a science with recognized symbols for the concentration of troops and material, a military commander had to depend upon one small gift—the secret of entry into another man's mind to discover what was passing there. The greatest general the world has ever known owed his success to this power of guessing correctly what the enemy was going to do. Many can guess, but few guess right, and in a military sense it has been observed that the best guessers, including Napoleon, were those who had the best Intelligence service to furnish them with the inspiration for their guess. In the case of Mata Hari's visit to Vittel, the men of the Second Bureau were convinced that she was seeking information concerning the approaching offensive, because, since Joffre had contrived to keep much of his preparation from the Parisian gossip, there was no alternative but to investigate it on the spot. Yet the utmost vigilance failed to reveal any act which could support their conviction. Further, general opinion was all against them.

Mata Hari made no secret of her intention to visit Vittel. She had met an old acquaintance in Paris, a Russian nobleman who is today a well-known resident in the city, and he had informed her that a mutual friend had received wounds which had resulted in the loss of his sight. This unfortunate victim of war was a Captain Marov, an officer of the Russian contingent serving on the western front; he was at the time a patient in hospital at Vittel. Without any hesitation Mata Hari announced her intention of going to the stricken man's side to console and comfort him with her ministrations.

Had she quietly made use of the influence of her Ministerial friends to slip unostentatiously away from Paris, it is possible that she could have eluded the vigilance of the Second Bureau for some time, but, woman-like, she had to make a ceremony of her renunciation of the flesh-pots of the modern Babylon and celebrate it in a series of merry farewell parties. In spite of all their researches the counter-espionage agents were compelled to admit that her story of acquaintance with Captain Marov was correct and that it had been of such an intimate character that her desire to devote herself to the consolation of the unfortunate officer was plausible. The only flaw in the story was her statement that she was proceeding as an official nurse, for enquiry revealed that the Red Cross had not even been approached with the offer of her services.

Nevertheless, the hazard of having an agent of the enemy in the forward area during preparations for an offensive was prodigious, and the Second Bureau felt justified in trying to prevent the journey.

Authorization for a visit to the district of Vittel could only be obtained from the offices of the Interior and Foreign Affairs. But how could the counter-espionage agents tell the two men who were prepared to facilitate Mata Hari's journey that their friend was a dangerous spy, when there was no shred of evidence to support the contention? M. Malvy and the head of the Foreign Office might be willing to concede that she was quite capable of committing any folly in broad daylight, but they would reject the suggestion that she was capable of even a petty villainy in the shadow. But, argued the Second Bureau officials, our own nationals who reside in the army zone are denied the privilege of leaving their homes without written consent from the local police, who are qualified from knowledge of their affairs to judge whether the journey is justifiable. No visitor is admitted to these closed areas without an official pass, which is issued only after the most careful investigation. Why, then, award to neutrals, even friendly neutrals, a privilege which is denied citizens whose patriotism is above all suspicion? In substance Mata Hari's Ministerial friends replied:

"The restriction of personal liberty within the army zone is a measure which we can enforce upon our own nationals because of their common interest in the safety of their country, but, from the point of view of general policy, we do not feel justified in recommending a similar course against neutrals whose friendship we desire to promote and thus establish good relations abroad. Further, a general rule closing the forward areas to neutrals would inflict great hardships in individual cases, and that we desire to avoid. Such a ruling, for example, would prevent the charming and spiritual Mata Hari, the prominent young Dutch *artiste*, from undertaking the highly meritorious mission she proposes to perform for the benefit of one of our wounded heroes."

Thus, if Mata Hari's Ministerial friends committed no overt act of treachery, it is obvious that their generosity could be applied to dangerous abuse by an unscrupulous woman.

Confronted by such a policy, there appeared little that the officers of the Second Bureau could do but sit on the quays and spit misanthropically into the Seine while waiting for the worst to happen. They could not deny that the supposed spy was making considerable self-sacrifice (a virtue of which she had never been accused) in forfeiting her elegant surroundings in order to live under *macabre* conditions that were a fit scene for a Dantean inferno. Besides, there was her love, and while philosophy can explain many things, there are some beyond her pitch, one of which is a woman's love and the way of it.

Mata Hari had innumerable casual love-affairs, but did she ever achieve the ideal bond, that human weakness that ennobles its victims? Her friends contend that she did and point triumphantly to this incident at Vittel as convincing proof. Mata Hari later told her judges:

"While staying at Vittel I devoted myself to a poor Russian officer who had lost his sight. It was my intention to abandon my life of debauchery and to consecrate myself to the care of this unhappy man whom I loved sincerely. He was the only man whom I ever sincerely loved."

Her friends point to the sacrifice she was making, a sacrifice which inspired an extraordinary sympathy among those who had imagined that her selfish soul was swallowed up in frivolity and debauchery. Her life had given no suggestion that she was capable of such devotion. Hers was not the beauty that bloomed for one man, but for the multitude; she fed not on the love of an individual, but on the adulation of many until Marov reappeared in her life. The Second Bureau officers were the only people who placed an uncharitable interpretation upon her action. They said that the woman who wishes to be all things to all men cannot be everything to one.

As for Captain Marov's views on the matter, we have been told by those who pretend to know his thoughts that he is a brother in a Spanish monastery where he remembers in his daily office to pray for the soul of Mata Hari and gives thanks for the sacrificial love of the wronged woman who gave up her gay and voluptuous life in Paris to brighten his dark days. To Marov she was a fellow creature touched with divinity through the possession of angelic qualities. A man who has suffered as he has done is entitled to cherish all his visions of former happiness; only the churlish would dispute his right to that solace for the enlightenment of a life that must be spent in physical darkness. There has been no suggestion that this innocent victim of the war was aware of his companion's employment.

There is no more gratifying sight to the moralist than a penitent renouncing wrong. Let us make the best of it. Mata Hari had been the recipient of every luxury her wealthy lovers could devise in emulation as the price of her favours. Marov was not a wealthy man and, therefore, could offer no inducement which appealed to her luxurious senses; he could not even maintain his lover in average comfort had it been available in Vittel.

His impoverishment is advanced in palliation of Mata Hari's subsequent conduct when she found it necessary to provide herself with funds in order to maintain herself and furnish delicacies to the patient who looked to her for comfort.

Her method was characteristic. Marov's situation was such that she could not spend her entire day at his side, and the resources of bomb-riven Vittel were poor in the extreme for a woman of her tastes. No one who has not endured it can picture the drab misery, the pitiless discomfort, the utter stagnation of life in those overcrowded villages just behind the lines. Social intercourse, already hampered by regulations, was swamped beneath military requirements. For entertainment during her leisure, then, Mata Hari turned to the officers who were stationed in the neighbourhood and to those, still more numerous, who were passing through the town. The military activity was such that the French army appeared to have begun an involved game of general post, so that there were new faces in the town each day. For all and sundry, Mata Hari had a ready welcome that was characterized by an entire absence of modest reticences; she accepted as lovers any officers whom her fickle fancy chanced to alight on. In extenuation of this prostitution it is urged that she was forced to sell her body in order to procure funds to supplement Captain Marov's meagre hospital fare.

The stage was admirably set for an orgy of riotous licentiousness. Incoming troops, aware of the significance of their movement, recognized that tomorrow would find them in the line, exposed to the abomination of trench life in winter, while here a charming hostess was spreading out for their delight such pleasures as might be their last earthly revel. The lust of these men who were turning their backs on all that was natural, refreshing, and pleasant in their lives to face unmitigated misery, was only equalled by the trench-weary veterans whom they relieved. These men grasped greedily at the first opportunity to savour joys after weeks of deprivation in the front lines.

Most favoured of all her companions were the airmen from neighbouring squadrons, those young heroes who sported with death in many forms and who enjoyed a species of dark exaltation in the mortuary horror of their tasks; these were singled out for special favour, and as a class airmen have never been distinguished for restraint. Many of the young pilots were permitted to share her intimacy and cheer her loneliness with their stories, for which she rewarded them with wine-scented kisses and the bliss of intoxication.

The ever-watchful agents of the counter-espionage service missed none of this. Her voluminous correspondence was carefully examined without revealing anything but the most innocent communications between friends who tried to beguile her self-imposed exile. The monotonous regularity of her life was only interrupted by an occasional visit to Paris in the interest of her patient. So unprofitable were the watches of these patient officers that they were forced to wonder whether they were not labouring under a misapprehension in endeavouring to convict this woman of intelligence with the enemy. Spying in the forward area was an entirely different matter to doing the same kind of work under concealment of life in a crowded city where the indifferent civilians had not the same motives of self-preservation in watching for and suspecting any possible betrayers.

So passed the months of July and August to an increasing crescendo of bustle and excitement as the troops prepared for the approach of zero day for the great offensive. All might go well if only the increased activity in the Vosges and the Argonne had succeeded in concealing from the enemy the time and the locale of the real assault. It was

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the duty of the counter-espionage agents to ensure that no tidings of the forthcoming attack were communicated to the expectant enemy and they relaxed nothing of their effort. Finally all was ready.

Shortly after mid-day on September 25th the infantry attack in Artois was launched. The surprise was as complete as could be expected after such elaborate preparation. The German barrage was laid down too late and the subsequent confusion prevented the artillery from supporting the infantry. The German reserves for the defence of Vimy Ridge were not available. Nothing but the mud held back the impetuous French. For three days the surprised German command experienced acute anxiety.

Further south the attack experienced greater difficulty. The resistance was greater than had been anticipated because, when the attack was planned the defensive force consisted of 90 battalions; when it was launched this force has been increased to 192 battalions. But the heavy artillery preparation ensured a certain amount of success in several localities. Ground was gained in the advanced positions but the results were far from the high hopes raised by the optimistic staff who had forged this powerful weapon which was to open the way to the enemy's rear positions.

In several places the German front line still held its ground in spite of the overwhelming force directed against it and a week later the entire second position remained intact. When a general order closed the operations the French had lost 80,000 killed and 100,000 wounded.

Heavy as were these losses and inconsiderable the gain nothing but the paralysis of the German high command was responsible for omitting to furnish the means of making the former heavier and the latter less. As early as August 15th the place and time of attack was known to the lower commands, as was shown by an order of General von Ditfurth. The means taken to encounter it have been described by one German authority, General Feyler, as a "hotch potch" in which units were split up and sent to different localities, thus losing their *esprit de corps*.

The main objects were far from being accomplished. The eastern front had not been relieved of pressure and Vouziers, the local objective, was still far distant. To admit that the army had been betrayed was too damaging a confession to make after raising such high hopes. But that it had been betrayed was now a known fact. Yet the betrayer was inviolate.

Chapter Nine

WE HAVE ALREADY SAID THAT A SPY'S MAIN difficulty is not in obtaining information, but in transmitting it safely to the desired point. There is nothing which so completely tries the resourcefulness of the secret agent as the methods he employs in the conveyance of material to his superiors, and without some knowledge of the extraordinary artifices employed by the spies one cannot appreciate the bewildering difficulties that confronted the Second Bureau in their endeavours to intercept incriminating correspondence.

If Mata Hari was engaged in spying, she had the choice of many cunning subterfuges, but a woman living in the full blaze of publicity that attends a vaudeville *artiste* who courts notoriety, knowing she was under suspicion of the English, but ignorant of the extent of their knowledge, could not hope to keep secret a treasonable correspondence without precautions of an extraordinary nature. The ordinary channels of communication adopted by secret agents were too dangerous to be employed in her case, because the German authorities knew from their own experience that the best of codes can be deciphered by specialists, while chains of agents through whom the information is passed are terribly dangerous, since each link in the chain progressively increases the danger of the betrayal, as was proved in the German *coup* preceding the Verdun offensive to be mentioned later. Therefore some more than usually safe method had to be devised for communication with Amsterdam and Antwerp.

It was obviously impossible to rely upon the time-honoured methods which were familiar to all secret services alike. Simple invisible inks made from onion or lemon juices were often employed to introduce information into an innocent-looking missive, a simple device which would have spared Nathan Hale's life had he known of it. One only had to heat the paper to make the writing visible. This old method was very early abandoned in favour of more scientific devices that defied the recognized methods of detection. Since it was necessary to avoid creating any suspicion of the materials used, it became necessary to import them from the agent's headquarters and it was this form of smuggling which most often revealed a new chemical agent employed for the purpose. Soaps and toilet waters containing ferrate of potassium and lead acetate for the manufacture of invisible inks became part of a spy's equipment, while handy methods, such as the dipping of a pocket handkerchief saturated with this chemical in a glass of water provided the agent with a means of producing the ink at will.

The writer well recalls the perplexity of a group of counter-espionage agents over a trunk containing nothing but soiled underclothes which had been sent from Amsterdam to a man who had not been in that city for many months. It was the mere fact that all the clothes were soiled that caused the examiners to subject them to a careful scrutiny. Only when a chemical test was applied to every article was it found that one pair of socks was heavily saturated with the material for making enough invisible ink to have supplied a battalion of spies. The remainder of the clothes were unexceptional.

The most amazing craftsman in the use of invisible inks was an Argentine called Dei Pasi, who reported to Gruber in Geneva. Dei Pasi was the typical swarthy spy of the stage romances, with a natural catlike tread and that quick sidelong glance of a man who is instinctively on his guard against the weight of a hand clapped suddenly on his shoulder. His equipment of invisible inks was amazing in its variety and completeness, and yet he was detected only when he sent information concerning the cruiser *Kleber* through the ordinary mail to Switzerland, written in ordinary ink, and in plain ordinary writing instead of cipher. It is believed that it was this romantic son of the warm south who tried, unsuccessfully, to send a message through a channel which almost deserved a better fate for its originality. He sent the designs of an artillery improvement drawn in the delicate folds of a ballet-dancer's skirt, but, alas! misfortune too often wears a skirt; it was discovered.

Another favourite means of communicating with superiors in a distant country was by means of small advertisements in the newspapers, but this practice became too dangerous in France, where all such notices had to be submitted to the police before publication, while in England the newspaper staffs developed an extraordinary scent for the suspicious advertisement and voluntarily co-operated with the police in preventing their publication. One spy made use of the "For Sale" column to insert cleverly concealed information relating to the movements of British naval vessels. But if this method had the advantage that when a director of espionage wished to secure secret information all he had to do was to read the enemy newspapers, it had the drawback that intentionally inaccurate information sometimes continued to appear in the usual way long after a spy had withdrawn from the world at large to become the inmate of a prison. The Scotland Yard officials have only recently discarded a motor-car which was purchased from funds received for information supplied in this way. The police had seized the spy Müller and were fortunate enough to have acquired his code book and instructions at the same time. Armed with these documents, the English Intelligence Department continued to furnish the German officials carefully "doctored" information, which so pleased the latter that they increased their spy's salary. It should be explained on behalf of the London police that they showed their gratitude for this unexpected windfall by purchasing a car and calling it "Müller," after its unintentional donor.

At the risk of further digression we must here relate an instance of supplying false information to the enemy which is too good to omit. In England, as in Germany, the Intelligence services of the army and the navy are separate departments, only, whereas in Germany the two services fought each other with the dogged perseverance of the proverbial Kilkenny cats, their opposite numbers in London contrived to work with commendable co-operation except in this one case. Sir Reginald Hall, the exceedingly astute head of the Admiralty Intelligence service, once ran across an enemy agent who seemed a likely fellow to snatch greedily at any morsel of confidential information. At this time Sir Reginald wanted very badly to have the enemy misconstrue the meaning of a naval concentration which was in contemplation, so he allowed the watchful spy to receive, in strict confidence, the knowledge that the ships were collecting in order to cover a landing of troops somewhere between the Ems and the Weser.

This threatened violation of their territory came to the ears of the Dutch statesmen, who had to be gently pacified. It also arrived at the Imperial headquarters, where it created genuine alarm. Several reserve divisions were immediately detached from their formations and were moved to meet the menace. Sure enough, this movement of troops was observed and reported upon by the zealous British agents, only in this case the reports went to the War Office and not to the Admiralty.

British military strategists submitted the problem to careful examination and decided that it indicated an intention on the part of the Germans to undertake an invasion of the south coast. They speedily drew up a plan of defence and invited the co-operation of the Admiralty in opposing this threat to the safety of the realm. Enquiries on the matter were naturally addressed to Hall by his superiors and he had to admit that his little plot to deceive the enemy had also succeeded in confusing his friends at the War Office.

Enough has been written to give some idea of the variety of methods at Mata Hari's disposal if she was contemplating sending information to Amsterdam and to show the manner in which the counter-espionage services were meeting the ever-changing subtlety of the spies. The Second Bureau explored the entire complicated field in order to grasp some incriminating fact. Her influential friends made it positively necessary to have some concrete evidence of her guilt before they could take any steps to even demand the withdrawal of her permission to remain in France, apart from obtaining a conviction before a court-martial, where the evidence submitted would have to be conclusive. If any of her actions were of a suspicious character they could always be explained by the nature of her profession as a light-of-love. But, even admitting that she was spying, how was it possible to continue to send messages to her chiefs when the French agents watched every movement with meticulous care and found nothing damaging? It is notorious that reports were sometimes passed by word of mouth, but the careful scrutiny of all her acquaintances failed to reveal anyone who could be supposed to be receiving and transmitting her messages. It is known that a man called Wecsler was the principal collector of spy's reports in Paris, but Mata Hari was never known to approach him. In fact, there is good reason to suppose that they did not know of each other's existence.

In order to appreciate the Second Bureau's alarm that men of responsible posts should continue to associate with a woman of Mata Hari's reputation and to follow the logical course of the investigation against her, it is necessary to introduce two more spies, not an unpleasant pair of underworld characters, but two certified scions of noble families. These were Ricardo and Dorlac, father-in-law and son-in-law, who were found to be related to eminent Spanish families; indeed, the older man claimed, we cannot say with what truth, to be closely related to the king of Spain. This precious pair of rascals were enrolled in the German secret service operating from Barcelona.

In Paris they occupied a handsome suite in one of those imposing hotels on the Boulevard Haussmann and frequented the select diplomatic circles, where they were generally recognized as men of standing because of their family associations and because they were travelling on diplomatic passports, acquisitions which afford the bearers many privileges and a freedom from the irritating annoyances which a malevolent bureaucracy invents to distract ordinary travellers. One of the privileges which a diplomatic passport affords its bearer is immunity from, or at least a greatly relaxed severity of, customs inspection.

The elder of the two Spaniards stayed in Paris, collecting materials which would inform his employers on the morale of the people, the movement of troops behind the line, and a variety of matters, while the son-in-law bore the dispatches to Geneva and Barcelona. The pair might have gone on with their work indefinitely had not Dorlac, in returning one time to France, somewhat ostentatiously offered his baggage for inspection by the customs officials. There ensued a slight discussion over the ownership of a box of cigars which Dorlac confidently assured the inspectors did not belong to him. This was not only cowardice, but colossal folly. The box had a false bottom in which was concealed a cipher message of instructions, and rather than run the risk of being found with it in his possession Dorlac allowed it to fall undisputed into the hands of the French.

When he arrived in Paris Dorlac roundly abused his father-in-law for exposing him to danger of arrest with such a childish contraption as a cigar-box with a double bottom for the conveyance of secret documents; it was bound to arouse suspicion, he contended. The angry Dorlac further complained that as he ran the graver risks of the two he was entitled to the larger share of the recompense. As this money matter was the main cause of the argument, it was, naturally, conducted in loud tones, and it was not altogether by chance that a waiter overheard the angry discussion through the thickness of the door, nor was it chance which made him a Spanish-speaking waiter. Ricardo pacified his son-in-law with a promise that he would receive adequate recompense when the next payment was received, and went so far as to recommend the handle of a shaving brush as a good hiding-place for their reports if he was going to submit to customs inspections. This pair of spies can be dismissed with the comment that they had a quick trial and were executed in February of 1917.

The significance of Ricardo and Dorlac in Mata Hari's case lay in their diplomatic credentials. It gave the first indication that diplomatic privileges might be abused, and it became necessary to "place" men in certain Embassies that were thought to be careless in the manner in which they extended their privileges. As all ordinary mail for foreign countries was delayed for four days and was very closely inspected to see that it carried nothing injurious, ambassadors were not infrequently requested to secure quick delivery or special immunity for important private letters that had no right to the privilege of exemption. A man might wish to expedite an important business letter, or a mother might wish to convey sage counsel to a distant daughter, and occasionally an ambassador would condescend, provided the business man was of sufficient substance or the lady gracious and beautiful enough, to extend his diplomatic protection to the conveyance of his or her mail.

One of the French agents placed in an Embassy was so amazingly successful in his penetration to a position of trust that he got access to the diplomatic mail-pouch. It naturally took some considerable time to reach such a confidential position, but the results obtained proved conclusively that it would have been advantageous to have made the attempt long ago. Nevertheless, as a piece of counter-espionage work, this was an achievement of first magnitude, for, while there have been numerous instances of a spy gaining access to a single diplomatic mail-pouch, this ability to keep an Embassy mail under constant supervision is probably unique in the annals of espionage. It had an astounding outcome.

A few days before the offensive was launched against the Chemin des Dames, Mata Hari quitted Vittel and abandoned the rôle of a penitent to resume her unregenerate life in the capital. One of the first visits she paid after her return to Paris was to the Embassy of the Netherlands, where the French agent was submitting the mail to expert supervision. After a brief interview in an inner sanctum a high official graciously condescended to forward a letter to Mata Hari's daughter, Jeanne Louise, in Holland; it had been done before and it was done again. Some of these Ministers of foreign powers were willing enough to violate their diplomatic privileges in order to gain the approval of a woman for whose favours they had to compete so keenly. Probably the courteous ambassador imagined that he was morally bound to aid in the transmission to her innocent daughter of wise counsel from a woman who knew the world so well. At least a charitable construction may be placed on the action, for the ambassador was no enemy of France.

But the enterprising agent knew Mata Hari's reputation at the Second Bureau and he decided to open this letter, have the contents copied, and let the cipher experts work upon its problems. The letter showed how thoroughly Mata Hari had played the part of Delilah in the garments of Magdalene. It carried information of primary importance on a matter of espionage arrangements by which the French were trying to repair the damage caused by a formidable coup delivered by their enemies.

Toward the end of 1915 a wretched traitor had denounced Miss Edith Cavell and some thirty others for conspiring to convey lost Allied soldiers safely over the Dutch border. Among the group arrested were some women agents of the French spy service who had engaged in this other work as they did in anything designed to outwit the German authority. One of the defects in the hastily constructed espionage service in occupied territory was its organization into such a closely welded body where the members were known to one another. It was a fatal defect, although possibly not without its advantages by reason of the opportunities it afforded of mutual aid in the occupied territory. One of the women charged with aiding the concealment of Allied soldiers (they were not tried for spying), through either indiscretion or fear, for the German methods were not distinguished for gentleness, inadvertently betrayed the employment of a number of French agents. At the time the Verdun offensive was in contemplation, and to arrest these betrayed spies at once would doubtless have removed one source of danger, but it would give the French time to learn that their service was paralyzed and set about its repair soon enough to gather information which might destroy the surprise effect of the forthcoming attack. Consequently, the German service held its hand until the particulars of the necessary preparations had to be furnished to the lesser formations, at which time the risk of leakage really began. Then they arrested sixty-six French agents.

It will be recalled that Miss Cavell and her colleagues were executed with a great deal of secrecy. The American and Spanish ambassadors, who were greatly interested in an effort to prevent the commission of the horror, only learned that the death penalty was to be carried out on the eve of its execution, too late to take effective steps at prevention. The reason for this unseemly haste lies in the panic which seized the Germans when they realized that the French service in their territory was so extensive, and the frenzy of fear that urged them to destroy innocent people in the erroneous belief that they were leaders of espionage who might, if allowed to live, convey through those authorized to visit them in gaol a warning that their work was discovered. It proves their lack of actual knowledge of the situation.

The French espionage department was, therefore, deprived of the major part of their service in occupied territory and, while laboriously reconstructing the complex organization, had to depend almost exclusively upon information furnished by the British agents, whose service was unimpaired. Before long it became obvious to the German service that their army zone was being invaded by French agents, but how they arrived and where they came from remained a complete mystery until the day came when one of those strokes of fortune which pass for miracles of police wisdom furnished the solution.

The military governor of Brussels, von Bissing, had fallen victim to a pair of bright eyes that were physically beautiful but morally terrible. Their owner, best known in Brussels as Angèle, was generally supposed to have set too rapid a pace for her elderly admirer to maintain, so that he died of an overdose of ambition to be youthful and to indulge in the follies of youth. His death made the girl's situation somewhat precarious, for she had lived under von Bissing's protection in more ways than one. Finding that her growing popularity thrust her into a good deal of notoriety, which angered the patriotic civilians who declined to lighten the life of the invaders, she decided to confide her past to her new friends, the Germans, as a means of securing her future safety from malicious gossip or actual denunciation. The girl told how she had originally fled from Brussels at the approach of the German invasion, but had been induced to return to it in order to act as an English spy. The perplexed German officers who heard this confession wanted to know how she had penetrated their lines. She explained that she had been dropped from an airplane. This revelation released a flood of light upon the obscure problem which was puzzling the Intelligence department as to how the Allies were introducing spies behind their lines.

It will be readily understood that if the French or British could find anyone courageous enough to make the hazardous leap from an airplane into the abyss of night, it was comparatively easy for that person to find many willing protectors among the loyal civilian population of the occupied territory who could furnish concealment and assistance. It was surprising how many gallant French and Belgian men (and women, too,) were willing to make this perilous drop into the bowl of night and through an "Archie" barrage in order to serve their country. And let it be said to their eternal honour that none could have been tempted by the pecuniary reward, for the mere pittance they received for the task was a trifle compared to the financial magnates' salary paid the men who make spectacular parachute jumps for the benefit of the curious at the present day.

The practice of landing spies from airplanes is, I believe, an American invention, having been introduced by Lieutenant Bert Hall, an American aviator employed by the Turks in the first Balkan War. At the time of the formation of the Lafayette Escadrille, of which he was one of the original members, this remarkable soldier of fortune (he is now said to be a general in the Chinese army) was already experienced in the dangerous science. Dark nights, the darker the better, were the chosen times for these daring exploits. The locale selected for a landing-place was some isolated spot where a resident spy was already stationed. If the coast was clear the resident agent showed a light up his chimney and the pilot would then land his passenger. After the lapse of an agreed time, say two weeks, the pilot would return to the neighbourhood and, if the arranged-for light was showing, would make a descent, pick up his spy, and carry him back.

This method had the great advantage that the spy's absence was of such short duration that there was no necessity for the always dangerous written communications by which a spy is so frequently exposed. In this case he had simply to memorize his information so that in case of seizure there were no incriminating documents to conceal.

But when the Germans found that the occupied territory was being sown with enemy agents, they were not long in inventing a means of locating their landing-places. They placed sound-ranging sets tuned to pick up the vibration of motors near likely spots and, after a landing had been effected, there was a comparison of results which revealed the exact spot where the descent had taken place and a careful watch was then kept for the pilot's return. This compelled the adoption of parachutes for landings, which were thereafter accomplished without sound.

The task required a steady nerve at that stage of airplane experimentation and when parachutes were usually associated with the genial lunatic who leaped from a stationary balloon to thrill the loutish spectators at a country fair. Yet there were one or two hardy souls who not only made the perilous leap, but who made their way back to repeat the performance. There were not a few whose experience could not be passed on for the benefit of their followers, for they were engulfed in that great silence which enclosed the fate of the "missing."

To find these courageous guests from the midnight air, once they had landed, was a task beyond the ability of the distracted German Intelligence service. Their only hope was to learn where the pilots dropped their passengers for the aerie descent, and to concentrate vigilance upon that locality. But, if they ever took any living survivor of these exploits, none was persuaded to impart this much-needed information to his captors, who, therefore, had to devise some other expedient to obtain the knowledge. The evil grew to such dimensions that, finally, the phenomenal success of Mata Hari in Paris induced her superiors to allot to her the delicate task of ascertaining from the pilots themselves what routes they took and at what spots they took leave of, and picked up, their passengers. It was a job after her own heart.

This explains her fondness, apart from her already expressed preference for men of the officer class, for the airmen who came to Paris on leave and for the same class of men whom she lured into intoxication and intimacy during her alleged mission of mercy in Vittel. From their unguarded lips she learned the babbled truth which cost many of the tellers their lives before the routes could be changed for this risky work.

Before the astonished Second Bureau had recovered from the shock of their discovery that Mata Hari had adopted this unique channel of communication for her treacherous correspondence and had resolved upon a course of action, the offensive had been launched against the Chemin des Dames, only to be received with a devastating fire that showed only too well that the intention had been conveyed to the enemy, who was expecting it, but as yet there was nothing to suggest that they could do more than accuse Mata Hari in their minds.

Then like a bolt from the blue came the terrible truth. Within a few days of the unveiling of her betrayal of the pilots and agents a letter was received at the Embassy for Mata Hari.

This was not a reply from her innocent young daughter, but a request to pursue a matter previously mentioned and an expression of thanks for the information about the attack on the Chemin des Dames, for which she would receive payment as soon as its reliability had been proved.

"While at Vittel . . . I intended to abandon my life of debauchery and to consecrate myself to the devoted care of this man . . . the only man I ever really loved."

All the melting softness of her nature must have run into Mata Hari's tender glance as she spoke those words, for the rest of her being was as hard as flint, particularly her heart.

How many of the 80,000 dead, 100,000 wounded, and 20,000 missing had tasted the bitter sweet of her Delilah kisses will never be known, but that they were many will be recalled by the survivors who have not yet forgotten how generously she dispensed hospitality and how liberally she loved.

It would now appear that the spy had run her course, that the Second Bureau, implacable in its hate for this detestable business, would immediately proceed with her prosecution as a spy. But here Mata Hari had them utterly defeated. With all their knowledge of her treachery, the French authorities were absolutely powerless to lay a finger upon her.

Chapter Ten

THERE ARE FEW MEASURES OF POLICY ON WHICH any general measure of agreement may be expected of the corps of ambassadors in any national capital, but there is one which instantly draws them together into an articulate unanimity, and that is any threat against their common diplomatic privileges. These privileges are guarded so jealously that any breach is regarded almost as gravely as a violation of territory. Consequently, when it was found that one amiable but indiscreet diplomat had suffered his diplomatic mail-pouch to be used as the means of conveying a treasonable correspondence against the security of the nation to whom he was credited there was much impotent indignation among the French officials. But they had to proceed with the greatest delicacy. It would never do to expose the indiscreet diplomat, because that would alienate the sympathy of others who might feel that they were being submitted to the same undignified suspicion and were having their correspondence examined by spies. While all were not so treated, some were.

Again, these were dark days in France. A Ministerial crisis was imminent upon the question of national security; mutiny had broken out in a portion of the army; as a result of the venomous campaign of enemy agents working upon a war-weary and discouraged populace, revolution was threatening to raise its grisly features in the streets of French cities; and, quick to sense this state of internal weakness, some neutral countries whose friendship for the Allies had never been very demonstrative were ready to provoke a quarrel in order to range themselves on the side of the apparently victorious Central Powers, and were only restrained by the wisdom of a few men armed with the power to hold in check those of their countrymen who listened for inspiration to the indefatigable German agents. To precipitate a hostile declaration or even to embitter relations with one of these neutral states might be the turning-point in the war against the Allies. A revival of confidence in the leaders of French opinion and a successful military campaign were alike necessary before the French could openly proclaim the application of a high-handed policy over the abuse of diplomatic privileges.

Therefore, Mata Hari was allowed to retain her freedom and to continue her treacherous activity, secure from molestation by the French authorities until she committed some blunder. The only consolation was that, with a little luck, they could continue to learn what military secrets she unearthed by maintaining the supervision of her correspondence.

With her work at Vittel accomplished, Mata Hari was free to enjoy the more congenial atmosphere of the capital, having renounced her intention of surrendering what she admitted was a life of debauchery in order to consecrate herself to the care of her one true lover. It would seem that she was incapable of denying herself any sensual pleasure. Being in Paris with the gratifying feeling of having accomplished safely a piece of difficult and dangerous espionage, she plunged whole-heartedly into the old life with a gusto stimulated by denial. Whatever luxuries could be provided in the capital were procured to replace the substitutes she had been forced to endure in half-starved Vittel. She reappeared on the stage, to the admiration of the officers on leave and the Parisians who sought distraction from the accumulation of troubles that threatened their entire happiness; in a few houses, wealthy old bachelors whose selfish profligacy overcame their fears for the national safety, continued to dispense a furtive hospitality which was incomplete without the central figure of the entrancing *bayadère,* with or without her veils. Vittel must have seemed very remote and poor Captain Marov completely forgotten in the mad whirl of pleasure which so soon engulfed her.

However, her stay in the French capital was of short duration. She departed this time on what seemed a perfectly legitimate journey, for she had a well-advertised dancing engagement to fulfil in the Spanish capital. There was a repetition of her former triumphs in this engagement, for she was so favourably received that her visit was extended. During this stay in Madrid, Mata Hari was lionized by the artistic groups among whom she had already many friends, but the artists did not monopolize her time. Conspicuous among her friends at this time were Lieutenants von Kalle and von Kroon, the naval and military *attachés* at the German Embassy and known to be the heads of their respective Intelligence departments in that country.

All during the summer of 1915 the agents of France and Britain were reporting to Paris and London that most of Mata Hari's time was spent in the company of these two officers and that one time she had paid a hasty visit to Barcelona, where she went directly to the headquarters of the German secret service in that city and returned without apparently having visited anyone else. They further reported that she was talking of paying a visit to Holland early in the next year.

Before embarking for this visit, however, Mata Hari returned to Paris and resumed her old life, which had been interrupted by the Madrid engagement. She made no public appearances at the Paris music-halls but she continued to frequent the dens of midnight revelry where officers went to pass the feverish hours of liberty granted by a few short days of leave in Paris. The officers of the Second Bureau were anxious to learn what line of investigation she was now following in accordance with the secret instructions hinted at in the first intercepted message from Holland, but her activities were so cleverly conducted that no hint of her purpose escaped the secrecy surrounding her. Then came a ray of hope for the much harassed officials of the Second Bureau. In January of 1916 Mata Hari left France after having announced her intention of returning to her home in Holland. There seemed little doubt in their minds that this was merely an opportunity to consult with her employers, but, on the other hand, there did not appear much likelihood that Mata Hari would attempt to return to the scene of her successful spying, so that Paris would be well rid of an undesirable guest. No obstacles were placed in the way of her departure. But her passing was signalled to the British.

Accordingly, when the boat in which Mata Hari was travelling touched at Falmouth, the police ordered her to accompany them to London for examination as a dangerous person. The chief of Scotland Yard at that time was Sir Basil Thomson, who has left an account of the interviews in his book of reminiscences. Thomson admits that he was impressed by the intelligence the spy displayed in her answers to his questions and her quick repartee. He was not impressed, however, by her beauty, which, he says, had begun to fade (she was then forty and had lived through ten dissipated years which must have left their mark on her features), and she was growing plump.

Thomson did not mince matters in the two interviews he had with her. In fact, he quite frankly accused her of carrying on a correspondence with the enemy. This Mata Hari denied as an absurdity, only to be confronted with the names of the various German agents with whom she had spent so much of her time while in Madrid. Instead of being at all disconcerted by this revelation of his knowledge of her actions, Mata Hari merely expressed astonishment, assuring him that she had no idea von

Kalle and von Kroon were engaged in Intelligence work; she knew them as *attachés* at the Legation, but not as the chiefs of the German secret service in Spain.

This first interview ended in a stalemate. A painstaking search of the actress' baggage was no more profitable. There appeared no reason why Mata Hari's departure for Holland should be further delayed. The cause of the delay and the reason why the interview was resumed lie in a fact upon which Thomson retains a discreet silence.

The President of the Council in Holland had written to the head of Scotland Yard begging him to obtain Mata Hari's deportation. There was no secret about the Dutch premier's infatuation for the dancer; that was a piece of scandal which no longer excited surprised comment. But it is uncommon for a statesman to request a friendly nation to deport his lover. There can be little doubt that Van der Linden foresaw her tragic end if she persisted in such dangerous employment, and he feared that the redoubtable Scotland Yard authorities might penetrate her secret unless he could get her home without delay.

Therefore, Sir Basil Thomson decided to have one more attempt to extract some admission from his captive and, if he failed, then to allow her to proceed to Holland with a caution, thereby performing a humane action by liberating a known spy and at the same time do a small favor to the Dutch premier, which might be added to the Allies' credit balance, then at a low ebb in certain quarters in Holland.

The second interview had a curious termination. The examination was even more severe than the first, but, while it failed to extract any of the knowledge of her activities that Thomson wanted, it did at last induce Mata Hari to admit that she was a spy. But not for Germany. She was, she said, employed by the French. This was a piece of sheer stupidity, for the dancer should at least have known that the French had enough difficulty in watching their enemies to have any desire to spy upon their friends. In any event, the risk she ran by lying was great because all Thomson had to do was to ask the French military mission in London to verify this statement.

Of course, we know now that Thomson was under no misapprehension, for he had been forewarned of Mata Hari's journey by the French. But he had failed to obtain orthodox evidence which would have enabled him to lay the case before a British court with any hope of securing a conviction. He told her, therefore, that as she had done no injury to his country he would permit her to depart for Holland. He added a piece of friendly counsel which the dancer would have done well to heed. He advised her not to leave Holland during the war and solemnly warned her against trying to visit either Germany or France. Probably profoundly relieved at the prospect of release from this very embarrassing situation, Mata Hari said:

"Sir, I thank you from my heart. What I have been doing I will do no more. You may trust me implicitly."

So Mata Hari was allowed to step out of the frying-pan *and* the fire. But she ignored both Thomson's warning and her own promise. Apparently she did not know that the British agents in Holland and Germany were warned to be on the lookout for her, and that the chief of the English counter-espionage service was kept informed of her movements.

Almost immediately upon her arrival in Amsterdam, Mata Hari paid a visit to the tobacco shop kept by Max Neuder. This establishment was already under the close surveillance of the Allies' agents, for it was known to be a "letter-box" for numerous German agents. The postal censors knew that they had a prize each time they intercepted a letter addressed to the innocent-looking tobacco shop. Mata Hari's visits to this place were promptly reported to headquarters in London and in Paris, thus confirming further the existing suspicion against her.

At the time of the dancer's return to her home, the German authorities had become exasperated by the audacious exploits of an English agent who defied their best efforts at detection. When, finally, they received an awe-inspiring rebuke from the All Highest for a particularly impudent performance by this spy, it was decided to call in the aid of Mata Hari, to whom the man was believed to be known.

In order to appreciate the situation which faced the dancer one must have at least a glimpse of her opponent.

The fame of "Mr. C." is already known to those American secret agents whose work lay along naval lines. Few people either in his own country or abroad knew that this symbol covered the identity of an English army captain called Reilly, who was the Admiralty's "ace" in espionage. Reilly had an extraordinary faculty for acquiring a perfect knowledge of languages and for impersonating exactly the type of people whose language he was speaking. To this he added the advantages of his Irish ancestors' quickness of thought, fertile imagination, readiness of tongue, and unbounded courage. He knew several European countries better than he knew his own.

Reilly's most astounding *coup* against the Germans reads like a romance. It has rarely been equalled, and only excelled by his own later exploits in Russia.

An order had been sent to German army headquarters to send a responsible officer to receive instructions on naval policy from the Emperor. The man chosen was an unknown junior officer, for the staff had their own ideas concerning responsibility. However, he displayed considerable intelligence and a broad knowledge of naval and military matters during the explanation of the new submarine policy which was laid before him. He requested amplification of indefinite points, clarity in place of some obscurities, and a detailed instruction upon the army's co-operation to produce the desired political effect. His alertness and zeal so impressed the seniors that they were convinced that their policy would not be misinterpreted at army headquarters, and the Emperor was so struck by the amiable young officer that he invited him to lunch.

The visitor to the Kaiser's luncheon table was "Mr. C." the British Admiralty agent.

Reilly exhibited the signs of a master-craftsman in this performance. He displayed a technique that shows how profoundly he studied the men against whom he was working. It was not so well known then as now, that the German headquarters staff frequently courted disaster in employing young and inexperienced officers upon tasks that are usually delegated to more experienced men. The classic example is that recounted in von Kluck's memoirs, where a visiting colonel from the staff overrode this army commander's orders and ignored the general plan for the invasion of Belgium in order to impose his own ideas upon the handling of the situation.

Reilly's close study of the men he was watching must have acquainted him with this peculiarity of the staff. How he should have known who was entrusted with the mission I do not pretend to know, but it will look less like a miracle when the reader knows that during many months of the war one of Prince Rupprecht's staff majors was a British agent, and that he contrived to keep his employers well furnished with information in spite of the vigilant observation of other men who were jealous of his influence with their commander and who sought his downfall in order to occupy his place.

How Reilly contrived to waylay or kidnap his victim in order to impersonate him remains a mystery, and will probably continue to do so, for the files of the British secret service are well nigh inaccessible.

Nor is it known how long it was before the German authorities realized they had been duped. Their side of the question is no less enshrouded in silence that is likely to remain impenetrable, unless one of the actors should choose to speak. But before dismissing Captain Reilly to make way for Mata Hari, space might be found for mention of another sensational *coup*.

After the war he was sent to Russia, where he struck up an acquaintance with Trotsky, then Commissioner of War, who introduced him to Lenin. The leader of the revolution speedily recognized that Reilly's great knowledge of Europe made him a decided acquisition in the Foreign Office. It was while acting as an official in this department that the British agent saw a letter which he judged would be of interest to his employers. This was the famous Zinovief letter which was instrumental in wrecking MacDonald's first labour government in England.

But the Russian secret police had come to suspect him during an absence from his post in connection with the disposal of this document. The

G. P. U. have an unenviable reputation as a power for vengeance. When Reilly was travelling back to Russia, their secret agents picked up his trail in Berlin and accompanied the train to the frontier. No sooner was the frontier line passed than these agents took Reilly off the train and, without even the apology of a trial, riddled his body with bullets.

Such, then, was the man whom Mata Hari was called upon to expose. Her choice in the search depended entirely upon her acquaintance with the agent who was supposed to be operating. Her meeting with this agent antedated the war and took place in a Balkan town. Mata Hari had been instructed at that time to scrape up an acquaintance with the man who was believed to be in possession of some exceedingly valuable knowledge much envied by the Germans. Knowing that he was an old Indian army officer, Mata Hari thought that her imaginary Hindu origin might serve as a suitable basis of common interest. She approached the British agent, therefore, and said to him:

"Have we not met before? Ah yes. In India, was it not?"

"More likely in Berlin," was the uncompromising retort, which should have warned Mata Hari that the British were fully aware of her activities long before war broke out.

However, this lesson never seems to have been completely mastered by Mata Hari, and as she was most probably too vain to report these snubs to her employers, they were unable to warn her that they were portents of danger. But her efforts to locate the man who was causing so much uneasiness at Fräulein Lesser's headquarters proved completely unavailing, and after having employed herself about the usual haunts of Intelligence agents in Amsterdam and Antwerp, the dancer spent some little time in Germany, where she had no professional engagements to fulfil.

It would be an insult to the undoubted intelligence of the chiefs of the German secret service to suppose that they entertained any great hope of success that Mata Hari would have their intended victim surrendered to her by some chance encounter. They were much too wise to be so sanguine of fate's friendly assistance, and much too subtle to admit a limit to their resources. They planned a *coup* which was intended to relieve them of much anxiety on the score of Belgian spies.

The information concerning the dropping of enemy agents behind their lines must have been exceedingly welcome to the German Intelligence staff, for they were enduring much annoyance from the existence of an efficient and well-organized counter-espionage service in addition to the extending activity of energetic spies. The amount of spying and counter-spying which went on in Belgium must have been phenomenal. The Allies had the assistance of practically every Belgian in the occupied territory who possessed the necessary hardihood and who was capable of responding to the claims of patriotism. This patriotic motive placed the invading army under a severe handicap, since the best minds were thus employed against them, either actively in espionage or passively in the resistance of their own agents.

But the famous Stieber (and Fouché before him) had found that felons and crooks, if poor material for spies, made excellent counter-spies. Thus, while occupying France and Belgium, the Germans organized regular gaol deliveries of every convict who would undertake the malodorous work of treachery in return for his liberty. These hired renegades proved of incalculable value in the famous sweep which resulted in the seizure of the sixty-six French agents. The most notorious of them, Armand Jeannes, boasted that he had betrayed no fewer than one hundred and twenty-six of his fellow countrymen and women.

Every class of Belgian was engaged in the task of outwitting their invading hosts. Simple peasants did what they could, educated men like the Judge Lacroix accomplished infinitely more because they occupied influential positions, and cultured women like Louise de Bettignies achieved marvels of deception.

Louise de Bettignies deserves special mention because her refinement seemed to render her singularly unfitted for the rough and active work of organizing a corps of spies to operate in British interests. Yet this girl, and others like her, developed a resource, a courage, and a fortitude of which many men could justifiably be proud. One day, while somewhat of an amateur at the business, Louise was trying to cross the frontier into Holland without the necessary papers, when she was overtaken by a patrol. Her message was so ill-concealed that exposure must certainly follow capture, and the prospect of death before a firing party did not appeal to Louise. She preferred to risk another form of calamity. Somehow or other she had to cross a wire fence which was charged with 14,000 volts of electric current. In her flight from the advancing patrol the girl had scrambled to the top of the roof of a stable and, seeing that she had been observed, she took a flying leap which barely carried her over the sinister barrier into safety.

Thereafter, Louise de Bettignies resolved to use her brain in order to spare her body. Two of her deceptions are masterly. Her usual disguise was that of a lace-seller, which enabled her to tramp from village to village, organizing her little band of spies, but this did not spare her from periodical searches by the alert women agents of the German police. Her principal tormentor was one woman agent who made a practice of seizing and searching Louise on sight. On one occasion this active counter-espionage agent encountered Louise at a moment when the girl would gladly have been spared a meeting, because she was carrying papers that would certainly involve a terrible punishment were they discovered. It was a stormy, wet day, and Louise was carrying an umbrella which she humanely offered as cover to the police agent who fell into step beside her. For once they chatted more or less amicably, but it is characteristic of the devotion to their duty which distinguishes the good agents, that the German woman did not permit this courtesy to interfere with her duty. As soon as they arrived at the first town Louise was ordered to enter the police station and submit to a very thorough search.

Although the girl was stripped naked and all her possessions examined with minute care, nothing of interest was revealed. But the search appeared to have frightened the girl; she was abnormally agitated when informed that she might proceed on her way. This agitation was stage play. Louise knew very well that she was under suspicion of being in possession of secret documents, and at all costs she had to draw the attention of the agents from the hiding-place of her treasure. But their attentions were considered sufficient excuse for the girl's apparent agitation, and the police saw nothing extraordinary in the fact that she should walk out of their station without her umbrella and have to return some minutes later to recover it. That mere act was a fine stroke, for it showed the enemy agents that this article was a trifle which could be easily overlooked when, in point of fact, the papers were concealed in a hollow rib of the umbrella. No ruse could have distracted attention from the hiding-place better than this.

On yet another occasion this same spy was requested by the British to furnish them with information which would enable them to locate enemy gun positions in the neighbourhood of Lille. The task of giving such exceedingly exact information was beyond the capability of any code.

Nothing but a very accurate map could suffice. Nevertheless, Louise had among her many assistants several who could draw a map with creditable accuracy and also a photographer who was able to apply his art to the reproduction of a minute copy of this work. The precious map was eventually reduced to the size of a large pin head, but even this had to be carefully concealed. At last a lens was removed from the frame of a pair of spectacles, the paper stuck on the edge, and the glass replaced. It went safely over the frontier in this hiding-place and the English were able to undertake one of the most successful counter-battery shoots which marked the war.

Louise de Bettignies was eventually caught. She was then on the verge of nervous break-down produced by her unremitting labours, and her subsequent examination proved exceedingly valuable to the Germans. The girl and some of her companions, whom she unwillingly involved, were sentenced to death, although the sentence in her case was commuted to one of twenty-seven years imprisonment. Louise died in Cologne shortly before the armistice and was accorded full military honours by the British and French when her body was disinterred for burial at her own home.

In order to overcome this menace of spying in

Belgium where the enemy agents were giving evidence of increased audacity, the Germans determined to make use of their accomplished instrument, Mata Hari. The dancer was sent back to Paris with instructions to obtain the necessary information which would enable them to break up this nest of spies. After her experience in London it was out of the question to send her back by that route. Had she not promised Sir Basil Thomson to avoid France? Had she not also broken her promise to him to remain away from Germany? She had visited that country and it was not improbable that the chief of Scotland Yard had been informed of the violation of her undertaking. So she went back to France through Switzerland and, thanks to her diplomatic associations, she experienced no difficulties at the carefully-guarded frontier.

Left to herself, Mata Hari seems to have been equal to most occasions, but now that she was only the instrument of a prearranged scheme, the whole affair was sadly bungled. It was conducted in full accordance with a routine that never varied. It lacked the subtle touch of the master-spy. To appreciate the significance of her subsequent actions it is necessary to understand another phase of spy tactics.

It is impossible to apply the ordinary standards of conduct to the well-trained spy. Not only is his psychology a thing apart, but every action must be studied, nothing can be left to chance if suspicion is to be averted. Thus, what would be a simple, automatic action on the part of an innocent person becomes a tortuously complex proceeding for a spy. The most severe test of all must naturally come when the secret agent finds he is being watched by his opponents. Unless the man has an abnormally strong character he is likely to become panic-stricken when he first learns that the police are observing his movements and he may commit some foolish indiscretion which will lead to his conviction as an enemy agent. To guard against this contingency all the German spies were carefully instructed in their behaviour should this emergency arise. Calculating that a bold action would best divert suspicion, their agents were instructed how to act in the manner best designed to convince the watchers of their loyalty.

The most popular plan was for the spy, who felt he had incurred suspicion, to march boldly into the headquarters of the enemy and volunteer for service in *their* interests. So completely was this plan worked out that the agents were actually furnished with suitable information for their reports should they be engaged. This information was usually of the most terrible nature imaginable. The Germans were able to expose people whom they desired to see punished, some for quite harmless reasons, others for spite, and in not a few cases so that superior agents might be spared the necessity of paying for services which had become unavailable or undesirable.

At first blush it would seem that such an audacious thing as offering to serve as a spy would allay suspicion but, on the contrary, it had the very opposite effect. The German espionage is probably unique in this respect of employing volunteer spies. Not only does it account for the ease by which other nations have "planted" their own agents in that service, but it makes compulsory the employment of a large number of other agents to keep a watchful eye on these volunteers whose loyalty has been submitted to no severe test. No other nation readily recruits its agents in this way. The work is too confidential, demands such unquestioned trust and imposes such heavy responsibilities, that the agents are most often selected with great care from among men whose loyalty and faithfulness are beyond question. In not a few cases a man's patriotism is the only thing which can be appealed to in order to induce him to overcome a natural prejudice for a profession which so often implies the betrayal of people whose trust he has deliberately sought. Thus, when the agent has already been subjected to test before employment and has been found to possess the necessary qualifications, it is not so necessary to subject him to a perpetual supervision as was the case in the German system, where many notorious wrongdoers were employed and where enemy deserters were greedily encouraged. Certainly these types proved easy to discipline because they were in constant fear of exposure by their paymasters should their services become either undesirable or unsatisfactory. On the other hand, the police force necessary to control their doubtful agents had to be elaborate and it proved to be one of the most efficient departments of the service and many of their best agents were so employed. For the most part they were entirely devoid of scruples; they had no compunction in denouncing the men they watched, and denunciation frequently followed some harmless deviation from the strict path of duty.

To volunteer for secret-service work on behalf of a nation that recruits its agents with some degree of care is to incur the immediate suspicion that some ulterior motive inspires the action. In spite of this doctrine, which was so generally accepted by the Intelligence services outside of Germany, that the Germans themselves could hardly have been wholly unacquainted with it, they continued to instruct their agents to volunteer for enrollment in the enemy secret service should they ever have reason to believe that they were under suspicion.

Naturally, the agent was placed in a very difficult situation. First, the counter-espionage agent of his own service, charged with supervising him, might imagine that the agent was acting falsely and take drastic measures for disciplining him. Second, the agent had to accept whatever mission was allotted to him by his new employers, and after making pretence of performing it had to present a report which must bear the scrutiny of experts. He was, therefore, running a double risk. The work had one very useful purpose, however, in revealing those points on which the enemy were most interested, and for this reason served its purpose. The agent, having volunteered for service, usually reported this fact immediately to his superior, to whom he also communicated the nature of the information he was required to provide. If the German headquarters approved of his action they supplied the man with the necessary replies to meet his requirements, and thus deceived the enemy. But spies working in two camps are never trusted until they have given unmistakable proof of their loyalty and, on the Allied side at least, an offer of enlistment was usually enough to bring a person under grave suspicion of having been sent by the other side. If the volunteer was known to be in the employ of the German service, the action taken greatly depended upon what purpose he could be made to serve.

How terribly dangerous the course of volunteering for this service sometimes proved to be is illustrated by the case of Princess Wisnievsky. Although entitled to the rank of princess, she was not born to the purple; it was an acquisition by marriage. Her beginnings were so humble that she began at the very opposite end of the social ladder, for she was deserted by her unknown parents in the streets of Paris and was educated at public expense until she was in a position to look after herself. Being of an enterprising nature, the future princess came to an early decision that a life of independence was preferable to the irksome restraint of a state orphanage. She took the first opportunity to embark on a career. After many vicissitudes she became a rival to Mata Hari in her profession. At the age of thirty-three she resembled a miniature League of Nations, having taken as lovers an Egyptian, an Argentine, a Serbian, an

Italian, an Englishman, and a German, before marrying an indisputable Polish prince who was a naturalized Italian. To complete this lady's amazing international complications, it is worth mentioning that she finally was lost to view in a Spanish prison, charged with the murder of a Canadian.

The German lover was a member of his country's secret service and, having found that the countess (it was before her marriage and she had elevated herself to the nobility with a title of her own choice) could be of use to him in his work, he induced the feather-brained lady to enroll as a member of the same service. Her romantic mind promptly responded to the lure of adventure and she considered herself particularly fitted for the execution of confidential missions among the diplomats of Europe. But it was not long before the indiscretions in which she indulged brought her under the unfavourable notice of the French secret police. She was at the time editing a magazine which specialized in foreign politics, a labour which was found to cloak her spying under the guise of diplomacy. Her work was done so clumsily that it was felt most advantageous to allow her to continue in spreading misinformation through her review. For some time the princess was a joke among the men of the French secret service, until one day one of them frightened her into volunteering for the work of a spy in French interests. She was employed because the French were anxious to learn what the enemy wished them to believe upon certain subjects. They surmised that the lady would apply to her German employers for the correct form of the information she was asked to furnish, and by following her it was hoped to learn who was the head of her group. There was nothing to learn until the lady herself suggested how she should be employed. On being granted permission to act independently, she went direct to San Sebastián, where she was given a very complete report upon the situation in Spain, precisely as the German authorities wished that situation to be understood by France. At that time Spain was in the predicament of not knowing which of the belligerents to support, but the San Sebastián, propagandists were giving to the voice of the Spanish people a strong German accent, and it was hoped that the French might be deceived by sending back the double spy with a false account of the situation which pretended to come from some of the diplomats who contributed to the princess' review. Knowing its origin, the French were able to understand a difficult situation much better with the aid of the comments which the princess furnished.

Between Mata Hari and the Princess Wisnievsky there was a vast difference in spite of the few points of similarity in their lives. The titled lady was never dangerous, but Mata Hari was an artist, and that profession demands intelligence of a very high order. Had she been left to obtain information on the spy system in Belgium, it is probable that she would have tried another method than this, employing a greater finesse. Instead, it bears the unmistakable mark of the German secret service and its inability to discard outworn methods.

One morning Mata Hari called at the office of the Second Bureau and asked to interview a responsible officer. It is doubtful whether any visitor ever reached the inner sanctum of this almost impenetrable department with less delay. Not one, but a whole group of responsible officers awaited her pleasure. Each member of the group knew of Mata's employment as a spy and the deadly measure of her achievement, and all hoped that sooner or later she would commit some indiscretion which would enable them to penetrate the intricate defences she had erected about herself and so grasp the tangible proof of her guilt. But for the moment there was only one fear that was common to them all, and that was the fear that some over-zealous agent in pressing his enquiries had caused her to suspect that the Second Bureau were interested in what she was doing, and that the visit was merely the spy's customary method of self-protection, which would be followed by an increase of precaution that would remove from their possession the means of supervising her correspondence. If Mata Hari changed her channel of conveying information, the Second Bureau would have to begin again at the beginning. However, their interest in her arrival was interpreted by the visitor as a tribute to her personal popularity and aroused no suspicion. No woman is proof against her own vanity.

Mata Hari explained that she wished to accept employment in the French secret service and recited her qualifications for the work, mentioning her numerous acquaintances in influential positions in Berlin and other places.

"But," asked Captain Ledoux, "you will pardon us if we approach this question carefully. What is your motive, madame, in volunteering for this work? You are a Dutch subject. It cannot be patriotism which urges you to undertake the task, and obviously there must be some strong motive which inspires you to perform work that might end in your death."

"There is no question of my patriotism, *mon capitaine*. Nor is there any question of treachery, for Germany is not my country. My sympathies are with France and I am willing to work for her provided you will pay for my services. I am in desperate need of money."

This was certainly a strange answer, because Mata Hari had just made some fresh dancing engagements for which she was well paid and she had not spent all the money obtained for the sale of her furniture. Besides, she had other means of restoring her finances that were less hazardous than engaging in the task of spying against Germany.

"Since you suspect that, because I am only a neutral, I may not be animated by motives of loyalty to France," she continued, "I will give you proofs of my sincere attachment to your country. Yes, I will give you those proofs before asking to be assigned any work in your service."

After a little questioning the officers found that there was little information they could gather on points which they supposed she might have been instructed to inform them. But they did not know the tremendous extent of her secret knowledge.

"Do you know, messieurs, how the Moors are being supplied with arms?" she asked when their questions had ceased.

"Yes, we know that."

"You know that they are being landed from submarines, but do you know where and when? Naturally you do not or you would have stopped it. Then I will tell you if you think that it would be of interest."

Interest!

Since the beginning of the war the German propagandists had been stirring up trouble in Morocco and Algeria among the native population, who, as recently as 1912, had shown their willingness to revolt by brutally murdering the Europeans as a protest against the French protectorate. In order to encourage them to take further steps of open antagonism which would detain troops for the maintenance of order, the German authorities were providing a supply of modern rifles for the most intransigeant. This was regarded as such a severe threat to the French colony, in view of the fact that every available soldier was to be withdrawn from Morocco for service on the French front, that espionage agents had worked laboriously but unsuccessfully to discover how the weapons were admitted to the country. That Mata

Hari should offer to furnish this information filled them with blank amazement. However, one of the officers assured her that if she could offer enlightenment on the problem there could be no further reason to doubt her loyalty.

"Then, messieurs, if you will watch the harbour of Mehediya during the early days of March you will be rewarded. Submarines run their cargoes of rifles into that harbour before taking their station at the entrance to the Mediterranean sea."

"That is exceedingly interesting, madame, if true. Suppose you allow us a little time to ascertain the truth of the statement. If we find that what you say is correct you will be given a mission in our service. Would you also mind telling us how you, living here in Paris, should have come into possession of such very confidential information?"

"I am frequently required to visit the homes of diplomats to provide entertainment to their guests and with some of them I have an intimacy which enables me to hear the conversations at their dinner tables. Those diplomats are not always as discreet as they should be, messieurs. It was at a recent dinner that I heard this conversation about the submarines and I thought it might be of value to you."

After the lapse of only a few days Mata Hari was summoned to appear at the office of the Second Bureau, but this time she was not admitted with quite so much ease as on her first visit. The French were surer of her now. When at last she was admitted to see Captain Ledoux and his colonel, she was informed that the information concerning the German submarines had been proved correct. The previous night two of these craft had been sunk in an attempt to land rifles at Mehediya.

"We have had sufficient proof of your integrity," said the chief of the Second Bureau, "and if you continue as you have begun you will be of the greatest value to us. All that now remains is to utilize your services to the best advantage. Have you any suggestion to make?"

"Well, *mon colonel,* I have recently signed a contract to dance in Brussels. You know that as a Dutch subject I am privileged to move about in the territories of the countries at war. It is easy for me to get to Brussels from my own country, especially as I have influential friends who will help me. What could I do in Brussels? Do you have difficulty in conveying instructions to your agents there? One of my diplomat friends told me that it was exceedingly difficult to get the required kind of information from the agents in occupied territory, because it was so hard to tell them what was required. I suggest, therefore, *mon colonel,* that you employ me in carrying instructions to the agents whom you have already there. Being a woman, I might not know just what to look for if I were left to myself, but if there are others to do the work I would gladly get in touch with them to carry out your instructions."

"That is a good idea. Prepare yourself for the journey then, and when you are ready to depart we will give you a list of our agents in Belgium with whom we wish to communicate, and a copy of the instructions we would like to have conveyed to them."

In such simple fashion did Mata Hari carry out the instructions of her employers and obtain for them the invaluable documents which meant so much to the weary espionage agents confronted with the growing audacity of the spies whose actions were invariably obscured by the willing help of countless civilians. When the precious list of twelve spies was handed to Mata Hari, the officer of the Second Bureau conducting the business impressed upon her the necessity of guarding it with her life, should such an extreme penalty be exacted in its defence. The value of that piece of paper to the Germans, he said, was incalculable, and if they knew it was in her possession there was

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not the slightest doubt that they would make strenuous efforts to relieve her of it. The instructions were not less valuable because they would convey to the enemy knowledge of those points upon which the French most required information and naturally those particular things would be guarded with redoubled care. The officer then wished her good fortune on her first mission for the French.

Of course Mata Hari did not take any special precautions to conceal those valuable documents about her person. It was simpler and much quicker for the purpose for which they were intended to put them into a letter sent by prearranged channels directly to the espionage leaders in Holland. Her own journey must, of necessity, be delayed because it was inevitable in those war days that she must travel through England, where she would take passage on the *Hook of Holland* steamer. There was no alternative to that journey when one was in France. The risk of exposing herself to the London police was enormously reduced by the mission she was sent on, because the officer at the Second Bureau had already told her that she would be "signalled" to them, whose duty it would then be to facilitate her passage, but by sending the letter containing the required information through her secret and safe private channels it would arrive before she did.

What the English police thought about their visitor has not been said. It is not to be supposed that the presence of a spy in their midst causes any consternation to the police, more especially when that spy's arrival has been "signalled" by other police. To know that a suspected or known spy is arriving at Victoria gives the long-suffering London "Bobbie" a feeling of joy. It saves him a vast amount of labour in tracking him down when the job is reduced to one of mere watching, an art in which the men of Scotland Yard excel. Once they have located their man they stick to him with the tenacity of the bulldog which is the symbol of their breed, and they miss nothing of the other people whom he meets. They could appreciate the situation in which Mata Hari was placed because they made such good use of the double spy themselves, always, or nearly always, to their own advantage. But Mata Hari was a problem. They did not like her, they knew too much of her history to ever develope any fondness for her and, to be quite frank, they did not believe that her sudden conversion was sincere. However, they were prepared to accommodate their French colleagues.

When Mata Hari arrived in England it is quite

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probable that she made careful note of the war material collected in the harbour at Dover, where she landed. She had an unexpected stroke of good luck in being detained a few days in London, where she was able to observe the effects of the air raids and to note some of the measures taken to combat them. This was information which she had been instructed by the Germans to gather in Paris, so that it must be of equal value if applied to London. Her detention in the English capital was not altogether unavoidable, but since the English police just wanted to make quite certain that there was no one in London to whom she might apply in case of necessity, they got the clerk at the travel bureau to inform her that there were so many applicants for berths on the *Hook of Holland* steamer that she would have to wait some days before one could be allotted to her. When it was certain that she had nothing to reveal, the London police had no further motive in delaying her, so Mata Hari was informed that another boat was available for her journey and that the police would make the necessary arrangements for her. The obliging men went further; they escorted her to the boat and saw that everything was made comfortable and convenient for her.

This obstacle happily surmounted, Mata Hari was able to retire to her berth before the ship pulled out of the Medway under its escort, with the satisfied feeling that she had outwitted her oldest enemies, had completely deceived the French, and had performed another of those surprisingly brilliant feats of espionage which are associated with her name and which read like romances. A safe haven lay ahead. In Holland she would be received gratefully by her employers, there would no longer be the strain of living under constant fear of danger, especially that danger that creeps up from behind. Instead there would be reunion with her lover from whom she had been so long separated and for whom she had worked in exile with unfailing success in a series of the boldest exploits; there were innumerable old friends of that officer class she had learned to adore; and, besides, she was weary of Paris; she needed a change of pleasures and a variety in dissipation. Of course, there could now be no return to Paris until she went in the wake of the victorious German troops to enjoy a truly Roman triumph, with her former French lovers as her trophies. It was a pleasant prospect.

Chapter Eleven

THE OFFICERS OF THE SECOND BUREAU WERE not really quite such easy dupes as Mata Hari had supposed them to be. True, her first visit to their departmental offices had produced a momentary pang of disappointment which was speedily dispelled. The reason the spy had given for approaching them was her urgent need for money, a very plausible excuse for one with her extravagant tastes, but it was learned on enquiry that her bank account enjoyed an unaccustomed balance. Thus relieved of their first anxiety, that their zeal had alarmed the spy and that she would become more cautious than ever, and persuaded that there was a dangerous underlying motive for her extraordinary conduct, they decided to allow the affair to follow a natural course in the expectation that something more might be learned.

The news of the German submarines increased their perplexity. To anyone unaware of the tortuous methods of secret services this piece of information and the use made of it presents special interest. The betrayal seems inexplicable. Here was a woman who pretended to have been working in the comparative isolation of a field ambulance in the forward area, and had been performing in Spanish theatres, volunteering knowledge which had eluded the search of the cleverest agents in the French service working with infinitely greater resources. If the information was false no good purpose could be served in surrendering it. If it was true, how could she have obtained knowledge of it? Certainly none of the neutral diplomats in Paris was in any position to become acquainted with such a treasured secret as the submarine cruises, but even if she had obtained the knowledge from an outside source Mata Hari had been a spy too long to be unconscious of the risks she ran by committing such a breach of confidence. It was suicide if unauthorized. Information of this nature was so jealously guarded that only those immediately concerned with the allocation of the duties could ever have possession of it (often the submarine commanders received sealed orders), and to share such secrets was equivalent to an admission that she was in the innermost counsels of the enemy. We have already said that it is futile to apply the ordinary standards of conduct to the secret-service agent. Here is further proof. The revelation of such information to gain the confidence of the enemy is a method advocated in the German manual of military Intelligence.

The betrayal is inexplicable to anyone unaware of the prodigious lengths to which the harassed German secret service were prepared to go in order to purchase their reputation for omniscience. The lives of two submarine crews was the price offered to purchase French faith in Mata Hari, so that she might secure a confidential mission for the purpose of betraying that faith. As an example of German psychology this act would be amusing if it were not so amazingly tragic, because the only object it could possibly achieve with men accustomed to the curious procedure of volunteer agents, was to confirm suspicion. There always did exist the possibility that Mata Hari's offer of service might be genuine, but the accuracy of this priceless information she offered as bait removed any shadow of doubt that there was some deep underlying purpose.

It would, however, be interesting to know what the crews of other German submarines would think of this inhuman bargain which sacrificed their comrades to the needs of a secret service who were thus advertising their incompetence to deal with a situation that must have been foreseen during the many years of study devoted to the plan of invading Belgium. Or was the treacherous betrayal a subtle means by which the German naval authorities disciplined the recalcitrant crews of two submarines? Was it their intention, in throwing victims to the lions, to conceal the hand that was becoming too feeble to chastise them? Whatever the motive, the incident stands out as a piece of defective psychology; worse than inhuman, it was stupid. Instead of producing a feeling of trust in Mata Hari it irrevocably condemned her.

The next step was to uncover her real motive. The French had only a dark hint that Mata Hari had been instructed to obtain some other information than the landing-place of spies dropped from airplanes and the preparations for the spring offensive. In her correspondence received through the neutral embassy had come a request for her to expedite this work, a sure proof of its urgency, so much was known to the French through the intercepted message. The surest way to find out what Mata Hari was after, was to allow her to make a choice from the many missions available. The choice she made, of getting into communication with French agents in Belgium, revealed to the French officers the unrest caused by their steady repair of the organization that had been crippled by the German *coup* before the battle of Verdun.

That Mata Hari was under the impression she had been successful in her quest is proved by the sequel. But what she did with the two secret documents entrusted to her care is an unsolved mystery. That they reached her chiefs is beyond doubt, but what channel she used for their conveyance has to this day remained a problem.

What of the French betrayal of their agents? Was it not on a par with the German betrayal of submarine crews? Not quite.

Shortly after Mata Hari left on her mission the German counter-espionage service in Brussels arrested a French agent whose name was on the list supplied to Mata Hari. Three weeks later he was shot. That only one man from a possible twelve should suffer requires some explanation. The name of that one man happened to be the only genuine name on the list and it had been put there with a purpose; the other names were all of fictitious persons. The selected victim was a traitor who was serving two masters without honesty to either, for, while he was working for the French and accepting their pay, he was performing a like service and receiving a similar reward from the enemy. No nation has any use for the double spy of this type; his potential danger is too considerable and he is beyond discipline. Since this man was secure behind the German lines, he was out of the reach of punishment by the French, but by giving a hint of his dual occupation to the German police the punishment was left to them. We know that it was carried out efficiently, to the mutual satisfaction of both sides.

Now came the question of dealing with Mata Hari. The French argued that since she was deliberately betraying them in a way which was bound to become known to them, her work in Paris was completed with the accomplishment of this mission and she was seeking a safe means of escape to Holland, possibly with other and more dangerous knowledge gathered from some of her influential and well-informed associates. They were determined that she should not reach her German lover who had been controlling her work, but, on the other hand, to detain her would arouse the suspicion that they knew of her treachery, and they did want her to send that list of spies to Holland. First, because it would remove one traitor, second, because it might furnish them with the evidence they sought to bring about her condemnation. Unfortunately, they did not secure tangible evidence of her guilt; that escaped them. The co-operation of the London police was, therefore, invited, but even under their alert observation and the employment of different methods nothing could be learned. During her absence from her hotel the police undertook a thorough search of her luggage, but failed to find the missing secret documents. Upon which it was assumed that she had contrived to slip them through unobserved to her employers. The next thing was to render her powerless to commit any further damage to the Allied cause.

So, when Mata Hari left London in the dead of night with the comfortable feeling that she had outwitted the united secret services of two countries and was headed for a tranquil haven where she could afford to laugh over danger as only an unpleasant memory, she was wholly unprepared for the situation which awaited the dawn. When day broke and she went on deck to see the low-lying coast line of her native land she was greeted by the sight of unbroken sea. Nothing else was visible. When she addressed a question to one of the ship's officers the awful realization that she had been made the victim of the preposterous humour of the London police (a sense of humour that often has a salty flavour) was revealed in his reply.

"We shall not land for another two days, madame," said the officer.

"What, does the journey to Holland take so long now?" she asked in dismay.

"Holland? Why Holland?" asked the officer. "We are bound for Spain and you will be in Cadiz in two days' time—that is, if the submarines do not get us."

And of all the places in the world the one for which she had least desire to visit was the Spanish capital, to which she must go from Cadiz.

book as you get on
to the end of it. you will
be will be satisfied with this book,

Chapter Twelve

WHEN MATA HARI ARRIVED IN MADRID SHE was almost as destitute of means as when the inhospitable doors of her Dutch home had been banged behind her, fourteen years earlier. The only difference was that the first expulsion had been at a time when she was comparatively without experience in the profession of making one's way in the world with no other acquisition than native wit; her arts of fascination had only been exercised to procure her own gratification of vanity, her conquests of men mostly theoretical, for her practice had resulted in failure. Now she had the assurance of a varied and successful experience. With unerring instinct she chose the right spot for opening the Spanish campaign, for this redoubtable woman was very far from confessing personal defeat. The Ritz Hotel, which she chose for her residence, had the recommendation of being the most expensive in the city and accustomed to the reception of guests with a fine disregard for the days upon which bills should be paid, so accustomed were they to unlimited credit. It was also the rendezvous for the members of the foreign diplomatic corps and the numerous officers attached to the various embassies for special war-time duties. For these two reasons the Ritz Hotel was the most appropriate headquarters for a lady whose first requirement was an accommodating male who would alleviate her current financial straits.

But in this rendezvous of officers the task of finding a suitable companion proved more difficult than usual. It would be bad policy to openly court the friendship of the German officers, as this would naturally attract the attention of their enemies: the British would, as usual, have been warned of her coming and would avoid her like the pest; the Spaniards do not enjoy a high reputation among the frail because their devotion usually halts just before the time when hotel bills have to be paid. There remained the French. With a little manœuvring on her part Mata Hari secured a table in the dining room next to that occupied by the French military *attaché*. From the outset she employed the customary artless advances by which hotel acquaintances are formed, beginning with the commonplace greetings of neighbours as they take their seats for the meal. With a woman of Mata Hari's talents it is astonishing how far a little conversation may be made to go if accompanied by the right gesture, and she was an artist in gesture. But on this occasion every art failed, every advance was repulsed, every tentative movement was checked by a frigid courtesy which plainly indicated that the French officer had no intention of swallowing the bait which the dancer invitingly dangled before his eyes. According to the rules of her game, the man who should most easily have fallen victim to her charm was invincible.

This attitude raised doubts in Mata Hari's mind. Could it be possible that the French officials knew of her employment by the enemy? This made an interview with the German officials a necessity; it had already become desirable, in view of her necessity to have money. She had, and still has, many enthusiastic admirers in Spain. One ambassador from that country had cause to regret his relations with her, and a Senator is still among her staunchest adherents. Within a few days she was surrounded by her customary courtiers collected from various grades of Spanish society. But they proved the most unsatisfactory court she had ever had in attendance, and as helpers Mata Hari must have found them very inefficient, since they were unable to give her any aid in ascertaining whether she could make her way back to Paris. From the beginning it must have been apparent that the vigilance of the British fleet made an attempt to reach Holland well-nigh impossible. With a flat purse and an urgent need for advice and assistance, Mata Hari turned to the German officials for aid, and received it. Unfortunately, she immediately got an undesirable amount of publicity which deprived her of many former Spanish friends whose sympathies were against her employers and who were in favour of supporting the Allies. A well-known journalist, Ezequiel Endriz, published a series of articles called "The Lady of the White Furs" in the popular Madrid paper *El Liberal,* in which he spoke quite frankly of the relations between the chief of the German espionage service in Madrid and the dancer who was staying at the Ritz Hotel. The Allied officers in the capital were already aware that Mata Hari had been employed by von Kroon before these articles were published, but this showed that the dancer was burning her boats publicly in having herself proclaimed as a German spy.

Lieutenant von Kroon, naval *attaché* at the German Embassy, was the head of the German espionage service in Madrid, and promptly devoted himself to the protection of the dancer, but he does not appear to have acted with any special display of either generosity or tact. None of the German officials in Spain have competed for the posthumous honours of Mata Hari's friendship; only von Kroon had the misfortune to be found out, and could not deny the honour if he would. As an easy method of providing her with finances this officer decided to employ Mata Hari in his own department until some instructions were received for her disposal from the chiefs under whom she had been serving while in France.

Von Bernstorff, von Papen, and Boy Ed in the United States were not the only accredited diplomatic agents whose privileged immunity was the cloak for illicit activities. In Holland, and Switzerland, too, the German officials were at the heads of extensive organizations controlling a horde of spies. Spain shared with these countries the doubtful honour of being a fruitful breeding-ground, only in her case she was trebly inflicted. San Sebastián was the headquarters of the famous "Big Three" who directed German propaganda in neutral countries; Madrid was the collecting station for information; and Barcelona, with its anarchistic population, was a recruiting station from which Germany was able to enroll as many spies as she desired.

Spain was a regular battle-ground for all the secret services during the war, and some of the most thrilling dramas of spies and counter-spies are buried in the unwritten history of that country during the four years of world conflict. The German authorities made strenuous efforts to swing the country over to the side of the Central Powers. How nearly they succeeded has only recently been made public, but the English and French Intelligence Departments were under no illusions during the time the efforts to influence the Spaniards were being made; they knew that nothing short of the personal influence of King Alfonso, with the support of a relatively few loyal but influential adherents, saved the country from participation in the war on the side of the Central Powers. While much has been written on the skilful diplomacy displayed by the Allied representatives in restraining the Spanish people from taking the step which would have caused Spain to sink from the position of a second rate power to one still lower, no one has ever done justice to the lady who accomplished more than the entire Diplomatic Corps in keeping the country neutral. The inimitable Mistinguette, still the idol of Parisian theatre-goers, was by far the most effective diplomatist in the field. Her startling exploits in Switzerland as a French secret agent would make a volume of delightful adventure, spiced with ready wit, but her task in Spain was a graver affair, calling for an infinite tact, charm, and intelligence. One day the French nation, not usually ungenerous in its tribute to these qualities and never ungallant to ladies of spirit, might remove a reproach by acknowledging the invaluable services performed by Mlle. Mistinguette, even if it does not reward her for them.

Lieutenant von Kroon took Mata Hari into his employ as well as into the intimacy of his friendship. He sent her on another delicate mission to Barcelona which affected the internal relations of his department, and also to remove her from the close observation of the French and English agents. During her absence, efforts were made to learn whether it was safe for the Red Dancer to return to Paris, where her services could be more advantageously employed. Spain was not the stage for such a talented performer. The replies being favourable, if any were received, the spy was recalled from Barcelona and given instructions to proceed to her post. As Mata Hari was thoroughly convinced that this was not a safe proceeding, she consulted the Dutch consul, Mr. de With, to learn whether he had received any notification that she would not be received favourably in France.

This interview took place at the Ritz Hotel and the talk began by Mata Hari requesting the official to procure for her some funds which stood to her credit at a Paris bank. This service, she was informed, could only be performed by the authorities on the spot, but the dancer never appealed to them for aid or advice. She entertained the representative of her native land to a detailed (though not more than usually authentic) account of her entire life, and finally invited him to furnish her with a special letter of recommendation to the French authorities in Madrid, as she had some doubts about her reception at the frontier. The consul wisely declined to do this, advising Mata Hari that if she had a tranquil conscience there was nothing to fear, but that this tranquil state of mind was a necessity for all neutrals who desired to travel in the belligerent countries. The spy indignantly retorted that she was in no need of advice of that nature, her assumed anger only serving to convince an official who had come to the meeting ready armed with suspicion of her innocent intention, because in 1915 he had seen her frequently in the society of German officers in the Hotel Victoria in Amsterdam.

However, the authorities in Amsterdam wanted their powerful spy back in Paris, where she had to make the fullest use of her wiles in obtaining information on the production of tanks as a weapon of war. The accommodating von Kroon may or may not have been reluctant to part with an intelligent collaborator and a charming companion. Their friendship had ripened now to affection, for they occupied adjoining rooms at the Ritz Hotel. The young naval officer had given her tangible tokens of this affection in the form of jewellery, but when the time came for her departure Mata Hari became a practical woman of affairs (she was known among the German agents in Spain as "The Business Man") and returned the jewels to her lover with the request that he convert them into cash. Von Kroon either could not or would not finance her from his private purse. Mata Hari wanted more convenient payment for her favours and her labours. Either at her suggestion or upon his own initiative the naval *attaché* sent a message to Amsterdam, which was headquarters of the spy's section, requesting the dispatch of 15,000 marks (about $3,000) for her use. This satisfied both parties.

There was no real indiscretion in the dispatch of this message. Everything possible was done to make its transmission safe. When distant Legations desired to communicate with each other speedily they made use of radio, but since all these messages could be picked from the air by an enemy receiving station, von Kroon put this particular message into his private diplomatic cipher, so that it would be unintelligible to any listener unprovided with the key to his code. In addition, since the utmost secrecy is maintained even in intra-departmental correspondence in the Intelligence service, the wording was chosen with special care to be baffling to anyone who was not familiar with their methods. Von Kroon simply asked that money be sent to the spy H21 through the usual channels.

Seemingly no blame is attached to him for the outcome of his commonplace demand. Yet, when he put his name to that radio message he had signed Mata Hari's death warrant.

Chapter Thirteen

THERE ARE SOME POINTS IN MATA HARI'S EXPERIENCES as a spy where one has to pause in utter bewilderment until the presentation of all the related facts clarifies the situation. This return to Paris is one of the most perplexing incidents of her career. There is much about her conduct after the deportation from England which puzzled those whose duty it was to watch her and which suggests that there was some other motive than the necessity for information which inspired the German secret service to drive her back to Paris.

Von Kroon cannot have been ignorant of her danger; he must have known that an agent entrusted with a secret mission such as Mata Hari had confided to her by the French, and, failing to accomplish it, ought naturally to report failure at the earliest possible moment. Mata Hari neglected to report either to the French representatives at Madrid or directly to the Second Bureau, as she could so easily have done. Instead of approaching him officially, she tried to cultivate a casual acquaintance in a hotel with the French military *attaché,* who could have obtained her admission to France without delay or interference. This neglect is incomprehensible if Mata Hari ever seriously entertained the idea of returning to Paris. Indeed, there is good ground for supposing that when she volunteered to join the French secret service it was because she was aware that their agents were observing her and that she hoped to escape from France by accepting some mission which would obtain for her a safe conduct out of the country. While in England she was still in danger of arrest, but in Spain she secured the safe refuge of a neutral country.

It is believed, therefore, that when Mata Hari dispatched her precious list of supposed spies in Belgium to headquarters in Amsterdam she considered her duty discharged and the matter closed at the time when she was safely out of the clutches of the Second Bureau. Her conduct in Spain supports this view. There was no attempt to report the failure of her confidential mission or to establish herself in official eyes. Instead, she openly accepted the head of the German secret service as her lover and accepted assignments to confidential duties which were partially known to the Dutch consul when he diplomatically recommended her not to attempt to re-enter Paris. Her employment was so generally known that it is incomprehensible her employers were not aware of its widespread acceptance. They had sufficient experience of the Allied secret services to know that they were not so stupid as to have overlooked what was obvious to others with less reason for suspicion. Why, then, in face of these ominous signs, did Mata Hari persist in making the attempt? But above all, why did the German officials permit her to assume the risk of returning to Paris?

Several of her more ardent admirers turn to this crucial point in Mata Hari's life and point to it as conclusive proof that she was innocent of any treacherous act against France. They contend that the absolute lack of precaution other than having her passports in order demonstrates that she had nothing to fear. No one has reproached Mata Hari with being a fool, yet this return to Paris in face of the alleged betrayal would indicate that she had taken leave of the common sense that they knew she possessed. Such an inconceivably stupid action is not in accordance with their knowledge of the dancer and the divine Brahma.

Several reasons have been advanced to explain this incautious behaviour. It has been said that Mata Hari had developed a great contempt for the Second Bureau in the growth of her self-confidence and the increase of her vanity after so long deceiving them. It has been asserted that she was assured in Madrid by German agents that there was no suspicion in Paris of her occupation. But this is an absurdity in face of her neglect to communicate her failure to accomplish the mission she had been sent to perform, although some secret agents hold that France had no means of checking whether she had reached the agents in Belgium or not. They had this means, that they had asked the London police to ensure that she did not fulfil her mission, and the English service had carried out the request.

The real truth is that Mata Hari did not wish to return to Paris. She knew the attendant danger. But she was ordered to go and go she must, or pay the penalty for refusing to obey orders. She struggled ineffectively to secure a permanent place on von Kroon's staff until she could make her way to Holland, but German secret-service orders admit of no denial. There are too many terrible examples of the calamities which inevitably followed a refusal to obey orders to induce any agent to persist in a stubborn attitude. At the time of their engagement every spy is given clearly to understand that implicit obedience is demanded and, if it is not forthcoming, there is no mercy to be expected. When the traitor Estève volunteered at Barcelona for service he was given a mission to France that he knew exposed him to certain, or almost certain death, but his objections were frankly opposed by the threat that unless he made the attempt he would be handed over to the French authorities as a deserter and a traitor.

Had Mata Hari not been instructed in the danger of her refusal to carry out her orders, she had, nevertheless, the example of vengeance executed upon a close personal friend whose death has already been alluded to in this history, Marussia Destrelles. In order to appreciate how Mata Hari overcame her reluctance to return to Paris one only requires to know how the German secret service carried out its vengeance when necessary.

Marussia Destrelles had resided in Paris for some years, passing as a Polish widow among those whom she met. She had a certain blond beauty to make her attractive to the eye, and this, together with an alluring personality, soon gained her many friends in the theatrical profession among whom she worked. Marussia did not take her stage career over-seriously, nor did she devote all her time to it. In addition to French she spoke English, Russian, Polish, German, and Italian. Her Polish origin was probably genuine, for she spoke French with the accent peculiar to that people, but there was little to be learned of her antecedents, and, unlike Mata Hari, she did not invent a fanciful origin, but spoke only vaguely of her family.

It is a singular thing that one may speak Persian, Pushtu, Chinese, or any other difficult language without incurring the reputation of being anything worse than a genial idiot, but to confess to a knowledge of Russian is almost equivalent to admitting employment in the secret services. Everyone suspects you. It was so with Marussia. Her gift of tongues seems to have predestined her for a spy's life, and before the war she was known to have established relations with a spy, the manager of a theatrical troupe with whom she occasionally played. This man claimed to be a Rumanian. At the outbreak of war only his precipitate flight to Switzerland saved him from arrest as a dangerous person, for both he and his brother were known agents of Germany. The brother continued his espionage work in Switzerland, with such open contempt for Swiss hospitality that the federal authorities were insulted by his effrontery and had him arrested and sentenced to some months in prison.

While her friend was in Switzerland, Marussia had to carry on their work in Paris, making one visit to Geneva to deliver her reports and to receive instructions. The experience at the frontier convinced her that it was inexpedient to leave France again unless she had an excellent excuse for return. Before long, however, it was necessary to make another journey to "see her lover," who was now in Lausanne, waiting for the reports she was to deliver him, and to receive fresh instructions for the agents who worked for him. She sought a suitable excuse to facilitate her return from Swiss territory, for, being Polish, she had to suffer the close examination of her motives in coming into France.

One morning she called up an acquaintance on the telephone.

"This is Marussia speaking," she said.

"Marussia?" came the dubious reply.

"Yes. Do you not remember me?"

"Oh yes, perfectly," answered the man, who was still very vague about her identity, for they had met only recently and were on such slight terms of acquaintance that the use of her first name puzzled him.

"I am sorry to disturb you, my friend, but I am in need of some small service which I believe you will be ready and willing to perform for me. It is a matter I do not care to speak of on the telephone, but if you will call here, Boulevard Saint-Germain, I will explain it to you."

The gentleman thus summoned chanced to be a journalist who contributed those entertaining paragraphs of gossip from the boulevards, the cafés, and the clubs which make the Paris weekly journals such spicy and maliciously funny reading, and, scenting a possible paragraph of scandalous gossip, he promptly relinquished his intention of passing a morning of tranquil ease in order to wait upon the lady's pleasure. On the way to the Boulevard Saint-Germain he speculated upon his selection for the confidence of Marussia, finally deciding that it could hardly entail any sacrifice unless the lady was presuming upon their slight acquaintance, in which case he could extricate himself from the situation by some journalistic excuse.

Arrived at the house, he went up to the fourth floor, where he was graciously received and generally treated as a tried and trusted confidant. Marussia did not waste time in approaching the object of the visit. She candidly explained that, having on a previous occasion experienced difficulty in returning to France after an absence, she wished to simplify her return from a projected visit to Switzerland. All would be well if monsieur would be good enough to send her a telegram on a certain day saying that his play was about to be produced, but that its presentation was being delayed until she, who was cast in the principal part, could be present in Paris.

Monsieur, without stopping to think, said that he would be enchanted to be of service to madame and then went into the gardens of the Tuileries to meditate upon his rash promise. It required several cigarettes to assist him in exhausting all the possible reasons why he, who had never written a play, should have to pretend to have need of the *comédienne's* services. He admitted that he would not have been so suspicious of an evil intent had it not been that Marussia spoke Russian and because of a curious incident which had befallen him just as he was leaving her apartment. When Marussia's manservant was ushering the visitor out of the apartment at the conclusion of his call the man had whispered confidentially into his ear:

"If you meet, on the stairs, a coalman or a grocer's messenger who stares hard at you, don't mind. He will be one of our men."

These two pieces of knowledge seemed to fit mysteriously together in his suspicious mind. He decided to seek the counsel of the local police. At the nearest police office he found an official who listened sympathetically to the story, but who recommended him to visit district headquarters, where he was solemnly told to present his story to the central bureau, where he was finally advised to go to the devil. Finding that the civil police did not appear to be unduly alarmed, but himself convinced that a woman who spoke Russian and fathered him with unwritten plays could intend no good, he confided the strange occurrence to friends. By good fortune one of his hearers had just had an unpleasant adventure with the Second Bureau which had turned out satisfactorily in the end. He, too, was a journalist, who had fallen under suspicion of implication in the German newspaper conspiracy, and in order to test his loyalty Mlle. Mistinguette had been instructed to approach him with a suggestion which would put his loyalty to severe test. The clever *comédienne* whispered to him that she was receiving handsome remuneration for her work on behalf of the enemy and that if he wished to add to his income, an introduction to the German secret service could be arranged for his benefit. This good Frenchman was horrified both at his suspected loyalty and at the supposed perfidy of his charming friend. Not only did he scornfully reject her offer, but he set himself to persuade Mistinguette to abandon the dangerous and treacherous work she professed to be performing. Through his obvious sincerity the man had obtained the friendship of some of the very officials who had doubted him before.

He, therefore, strongly recommended Marussia's friend to accompany him to the offices of the Second Bureau, where he was assured of a sympathetic hearing and the certainty of action if the suspicions had any foundation. The writer of the imaginary play was not surprised to find that his equally imaginary principal player was quite well known to the Second Bureau, but not so well known as they wished. Their knowledge was that she was in many ways an undesirable alien and one to be encouraged if she expressed any desire to leave the country. Her friend was, therefore, instructed not to retract his promise to telegraph for her, but not on any account to send the telegram at the appointed date, lest it deceive some unsuspecting police agent charged with the control of incoming aliens. The French representatives in Switzerland were then warned not to allow a *laissez-passer* to be issued to Marussia should she request one.

From the time of her arrival in Lausanne the French authorities kept her under strict supervision, a proceeding which induced Marussia to believe that she had made a conquest of the local consul, who was enjoying his duties immensely.

During her stay in this Swiss town the suspected spy mixed much with the kind of society which soon converted suspicion into moral conviction of her guilt, more especially as she was almost invariably accompanied by her Rumanian friend, who was known to be a German agent. Then came the time when her return to Paris was due. No telegram had been received recalling her to imaginary stage duties, so an appeal had to be made to the local consul. It was refused. But the amiable consul gave her some good advice which, if followed, gave her the hope that the refusal might be revoked. One of the conditions he sought to impose upon Marussia's conduct was the immediate breach with her associates of the German service and the serving of a probationary period of good behaviour. Marussia indignantly rejected the proposal. But, since she had been entrusted with a confidential mission in France, the requisite papers granting her authority to enter the country had to be obtained somehow. She went to Geneva to try her fortune with an official who was not accustomed to seeing her in the company of her objectionable Rumanian friend and his associates. Marussia was again informed that she would not be permitted to return to France so long as she chose as companions men who were notoriously enemies of the French people.

After this second rebuff it was obvious to Marussia that while in Switzerland she enjoyed the security afforded by a neutral country, in France she was exposed to the danger of immediate arrest, trial as an enemy agent, and possible execution. Still, it was her duty as a spy to return, even if papers were refused. The German service had a most accomplished forger operating at Berne, who could produce excellent papers of all sorts and descriptions that defied examination by the authorities, but it would be folly for Marussia to attempt to enter Paris with forged papers, since she was too well known. Besides, it was not only the consuls to whom she had applied for assistance who knew of her occupation, a full description of her appearance and the object of her mission would have been broadcast to all the police officials along the frontier, so that an attempt to penetrate the country would be attended with considerable danger. Therefore, Marussia carried her complaint of the risk she ran to Gruber, the head of German espionage in Switzerland, pointing out that an attempt to cross the frontier must be accompanied with the certain prospect of disaster.

That is not the language of spies. No secret-service agent can afford to cherish the luxury of flight from possible capture when his duty requires that he remain at his post. Men who carry their freedom, and often their lives, in their hands every hour of the day would not be able to appreciate Marussia's motives. Crossing the frontier is a business which invariably exposes the spy to considerable danger, even when his papers are in order, why, then, should she begin to have qualms at this stage? Recognition? Good Lord! was there ever a spy who did not risk recognition? It was part of spies' routine to avoid it, they were specially trained to dodge it, and if recognized by accident then it was their business to throw the pursuers off the scent. But to decline to execute orders because it was known that she was a spy—that was incredible.

Still Marussia refused to budge. She protested so volubly that the French got to hear of her predicament and, scenting the possibility of a confession and much useful information, they began to sympathize with Marussia. A reliable agent was detailed to offer protection against this new form of persecution by her employers. The French agent tried in every way to gain her confidence and, if possible, to induce her to betray her former associates. Unfortunately, the agent chosen for this work was known to the enemy agents. As soon as they found that Marussia was spending her time in the company of this man they became alarmed and appointed their own watchers to discover whether the woman was contemplating treachery, which was suspected from her protest against further employment in France.

One night Marussia and her new French friend dined together at the former's hotel. Shortly after the man had left, Marussia was invited to join a party of German agents who were making merry, in a neighbouring room, over a victory. They joyfully insisted that she share in the entertainment. What happened at that party has never been divulged, probably never will. All that is known is the tragic sequel, when on the next morning Marussia Destrelles was found, dressed in a pretty ball dress, lying dead among a pile of flowers heaped on her bed. Early that morning, before the official news of her death had been made public, the German agents were assiduously spreading the news that she had committed suicide because of a love-affair. This was contrary to the known facts.

There was great commotion in Geneva when it was known that a well-known foreign actress had died suddenly, and the police were instructed to institute a close investigation into the circumstances of her death. Medical examination showed that death was due to poisoning, but since the murderers had entirely omitted to leave behind any accessories for suicide, the malicious reports of her companions were exploded. Search in the room where the entertainment had been given proved that one cup of coffee had been poisoned and that was the cup from which Marussia had drunk. The costume she wore on her bier was not that which she had worn on the previous night, and the doctors declared that Marussia could not have lived long enough to drink the coffee in another room, remain until the end of the entertainment where she was supposed to have quarrelled with a friend, and then proceed to change her costume and arrange for the display of flowers which adorned her bier. Convinced that they had to deal with an audacious band of murderers, the Swiss police began an active search for the slayers, when a mysterious message from Berne put an end to further enquiry. The whole matter was allowed to drop, as was so often the case when German agents were criminally involved. But among the German secret service in Switzerland the death of Marussia was long used to inspire terror in the hearts of agents who showed any inclination to independence. It became the classic example of the ruthless vengeance with which the service punished its servants when they required to be disciplined. It was also one of the favourite bogies used to frighten nervous agents into a spirit of reckless courage.

In Mata Hari's case the tragedy had a bitter significance, because the women had maintained a close friendship over a period of many years. Although it is not known whether they worked together in German interests, their lives followed a parallel course, with Mata Hari holding the superior position, both on and off the stage. There can be little doubt that when the Red Dancer received her instructions ordering her back to France the tragic end of her Polish companion was a grisly reminder of the fate which would inevitably pursue her if she persisted in refusal to obey. As a spy she was responsible for her own protection by whatever resources were at her command, but it was obvious that her superiors would tolerate no disobedience. Had she decided to remain in Spain contrary to orders, she had no friends who could be effective in protecting her against the murderous vengeance she was courting, whereas in Paris she had powerful friends whose self-interest might alone induce them to preserve her from the relentless fate which pursued her. The Second Bureau did not possess the atrocious reputation of its German equivalent service, and it was possible that she might invent a plausible story about the Belgian affair.

"Perhaps, after all," she may have thought, "I may be exaggerating my danger. Even if the French do suspect me, they can have no proof, because they cannot make use of my correspondence without risking a rupture of diplomatic relations with the neutral country whose confidential mail I have used. If by any chance they have discovered my secret channel of information, which is unlikely, the other diplomats will protect me personally by protesting against the pilfering of their mail. As for the absence of the papers I had to carry to Belgium, I will say that I destroyed them for safety."

If Mata Hari ever reviewed the case in this light she was not without justification for her reasoning. Actual betrayal could only come through some other channel. But even if the spy herself had willingly consented to undertake this mission the German authorities exhibited a painfully callous disregard for the safety of an agent who had served them with marked success.

On the other hand, there is much to support the contention that Mata Hari was deliberately sent to her doom. The German authorities must have known perfectly well that Mata Hari had committed an indiscretion in sending the originals of her papers to Holland instead of sending duplicates or copies and retaining the originals in case she was asked to produce them at the last minute for alteration. There was bound to be the gravest doubt about her loyalty if these documents could not be produced. But this was not their greatest difficulty.

After the time of the Chemin des Dames offensive every piece of information she sent them was either inaccurate or deceiving. The list of routes used by air pilots which she had sent was without result, since the French authorities had promptly changed the routes as soon as they learned that Mata Hari had revealed them; some information she had gathered from British officers relating to tanks was also found to be valueless because untrue, and the German service must have suspected the truth, that her informants were enemy agents aware of her purpose and willing to further it by supplying false information; there was the list of spies in Belgium, of whom only one could be identified—another trick. Finally, the British had shipped her to Spain instead of allowing her to proceed to Holland.

What were the Germans to think?

They had the choice of only two things. Either Mata Hari was deliberately deceiving them, or her employment was known to the enemy agents, who were using her for the bewilderment of her employers, in which case her value had passed and she had become a menace. But whether they forced Mata Hari to Paris against her will for the purpose of surrendering her to their enemies, or whether they had some other motive, the fact remains that they did not betray her. Which may or may not be further evidence of their stupidity. Nevertheless, the woman might be forgiven, but there is little excuse for officials who kept on sending the pitcher to the well after so many warnings that it had become too fragile for the work.

Chapter Fourteen

THERE WAS NO ATTEMPT AT SECRECY WHEN Mata Hari left Spain, nor again when she entered France. At the time of her departure from Madrid she was attended at the railroad station by the customary court of enthusiastic admirers, many of whom had a sincere admiration for her art as a dancer, although there was a vociferous group of Spanish friends and a sprinkling of German officers to kiss her hand whose admiration was based upon other personal qualities. In spite of the atmosphere of suspicion in which she moved no protest was raised against the Red Dancer when she crossed the Pyrenees, because the path had been smoothed by a complacent French consul to whom she applied for visas for her passport. To anyone less superbly self-confident the ease with which her papers were put in order must have raised visions of future trouble, because travel in those days was notoriously difficult on account of the rigid regulations in force.

Since the Red Dancer's public appearance at the vaudeville theatres in Paris had not been advertised, her arrival in the French capital was unheralded except for one friend. The demonstrative welcome she had grown to love and expect was absent. Apart from the watchful police agents warned of her coming, the only other person present to greet her was the one loyal attendant who had taken a short leave from the Foreign Office to renew their acquaintance. His love, which had already passed through many vicissitudes at the caprice of the *bayadère,* seems always to have been rekindled by her presence. At the station the police noticed that Mata Hari's baggage was sent to the Hotel Plaza-Athénée, while the owner, taking only light luggage, took her place in the official's private car, which sped away to his own residence.

With that evidence it was felt that they could pick up the trail without difficulty, so the newly joined friends were not shadowed as the London police certainly would have shadowed them until Mata Hari would never have been allowed out of their sight. This neglect gave the Paris authorities a fright from which they might have saved themselves with a little more foresight. But when the officers of the Second Bureau thought that they would like to talk with her, the police were unable to find any trace of Mata Hari. For three days they scoured the city for some signs or news of the dancer and her companion. At the Hotel

Plaza-Athénée nothing could be learned but that they were expecting the arrival of Mata Hari at any time; her luggage had arrived and doubtless the lady was closely following it. At the Foreign Office it was learned that the director was having a few days' leave, the time was indeterminate, after so many months of arduous labour. But it was known he had not left the city, because he had been in telephonic communication with the Office.

But not a trace of Mata Hari could be found, and as her absence grew hourly longer the anxiety increased. This sudden disappearance bewildered everyone. The officers of the Second Bureau were beginning to suspect that she had embarked upon some other mission, such as that at Vittel, which required her presence in an obscure town, and that she might be stirring another witches' brew for their consumption. Their dilemma was the greater because it was known that money for her work was awaiting her at the neutral Legation, and it was not like her to neglect collecting it. When at last they did find her, driving unconcernedly to the hotel, the mystery had grown so profound that it was judged advisable to delay action for a few more days in order to ascertain what new mischief was brewing. The Second Bureau were not omniscient, they did not know what was the nature of her immediate work in Paris, because, like everyone else, they wondered at her temerity in venturing to reappear in the scenes of her most daring exploits in face of added danger. It was decided, therefore, to take a leaf from the book of their English colleagues and give the spy a little extra freedom before expressing their curiosity in the discharge of her Belgian mission.

There was the grave fear that during her absence from observation in company of a man who was in the confidence of the Cabinet, she might have used their intimacy to learn matters of national policy which, if communicated to the German authorities, would cause irreparable injury to the French nation. It was impossible to conceive the extent of the damage that might be done to the Allied cause through the indiscretions of a highly placed official during a few moments of unguarded confidence. It was already believed that through information acquired in this way, Mata Hari had been able to warn the Germans of the British determination to resume the offensive in the spring of 1917 and the French reluctance to undertake any active measures at that time, information which resulted in the withdrawal on the Somme to more easily defended positions opposite the British, but the retention of every inch of ground in face of the French.

However, her equally sudden reappearance in public and the casual resumption of her normal existence restored their confidence in being able to discover her aims. A spy working under observation is a very different matter from one working unseen, and presents only a fraction of the potential danger of one whose object is not even conjectural and whose methods are a matter of speculation. She did find a few spare moments to visit the Legation to collect 15,000 marks that were sent from Amsterdam for her reward, but she had nothing to report to her headquarters, which was a matter of considerable relief, since it proved that during those few days in which Mata Hari had eluded the police she had acquired no knowledge that was worth sending.

Then followed a period of wild pleasures of the old kind. Thanks to the renewal of favour of her diplomatic friend, her public luncheons and dinners assumed a decidedly diplomatic flavour. Grave and dignified representatives of various countries who did not find the task of maintaining the neutrality of their countries to be very onerous, struggled for her notice, and if they were rewarded by a glance from Mata Hari's sombre eyes they felt the day was not wholly wasted, while if she awarded them any signal mark of favour they left her presence as well satisfied as if they had negotiated an advantageous treaty for their country. At one such luncheon given by an ambassador, an observant journalist, who had his own reasons for keeping a close watch on the spy, noticed her amazing power over these men. So complete was her mastery of the situation that this man observed with astonishment that during the course of only a few minutes she changed the truth to suit her own requirements without having any of her false or conflicting statements challenged by her infatuated admirers.

But while rejoicing in the possession of so many amiable and generous friends Mata Hari was not neglecting her old friends, the officers on leave. Almost every night when she had completed her social duties she would start out on a tour of the night haunts until she had found some semi-intoxicated man who, by a little judicious entertainment of her own devising, could be persuaded to become loquacious in his cups. From one such garrulous gentleman, whose art on the stage was recognized as reaching its highest when playing the part of drunken men, she tried to find out what improvements were being made in the tanks and whether their tactical handling had undergone any improvement. But this was a fruitless search to undertake in France. The secrets of the newer developments in the tanks were being kept too closely guarded to be available to men in France, and the methods of handling them changed with every action in which they took part. But with this knowledge of her object in their possession, the officers of the Second Bureau felt that they now might call their own spy to account for an explanation of her neglect to report on her mission to Belgium.

The civil police officer charged with the delicate task of approaching Mata Hari was instructed that he must on no account cause her any fright. This officer, a Monsieur Triolet, was an experienced and tactful official, fully conversant with the spy's career and character, and not unfamiliar with the desperate remedies employed by hysterical lawbreakers to improve a bad situation. He knew that Mata Hari was a sufferer from what is now euphemistically called "artistic temperament," but which in those days was known as outraged vanity expressing itself through plain bad temper, and that at the least sign of contrariness to her wishes there had been scenes of blind rage in which the angry dancer seemed capable of any folly. It was not improbable that a woman with such a violent temper might try to inflict bodily injury on herself or the police commissioners if she suspected any harm as the outcome of this visit. They had evidence of her self-cultivated reputation for blood-lust, illustrated by her boast that she had strangled the slayer of her son Norman and had killed with her own hand the favourite pony, rather than allow him to be ridden by a stranger. Such a desperate character as she pretended to be called for special treatment. The most real danger was that if she suspected the police intended to effect her arrest, she might be tempted to destroy any incriminating documents that were in her possession, that is if she felt guilty enough to entertain such suspicion.

All things considered, M. Triolet decided strategy was required. It was imperative that, once he had gained admission to the house, Mata Hari must never leave his sight for a moment. Filled with this good intention, the police commissioner and a subordinate persuaded the hotel staff to facilitate their admission to her suite. The first sight they got of their quarry dispelled any fear of concealed weapons. It also dissipated their strategic intention, for as they walked into the room they were received by the dancer, reclining at her ease on a couch in her favourite costume, or lack of it. The embarrassed M. Triolet and his companion had not counted on finding her devoid of all clothing—it destroyed the scheme they had developed of persuading her to accompany them promptly to the offices of the Second Bureau. But fortunately, Mata Hari preserved her composure.

Quite unconcernedly she asked, "To what do I owe the honour of this visit, monsieur?"

The dumbfounded officers floundered hopelessly through some muttered apology for intruding on her privacy, but somehow managed to convey the impression that they had been sent to invite Mata Hari to visit the Bureau. Unless she had some convincing story ready, the prospect was alarming; but the dancer had that unwavering self-assurance which some women derive from the knowledge that they are beautiful, and she scorned to display any outward sign of fear. M. Triolet recalls how she rose to survey her pensive beauty in a long glass while she nonchalantly speculated upon the possible reasons for the desire to interview her. A little less self-confidence might have allowed her the chance of escape had she wanted to avoid the meeting, because the embarrassment of the two officials was so great that their modesty would have allowed her the privilege of leaving their presence to put on some clothes. But she seemed to have no doubt of her impregnable position and gave the impression of being genuinely anxious to find a valid reason for the proposed visit.

At last she found a possible excuse.

"Perhaps it is about my journey to Belgium that the officers wish to see me," she suggested hopefully.

"Precisely, madame," agreed the police commissioner, not knowing what she was talking about, but hastily grasping at any straw that would rescue him from his dilemma. "It must be that, because, now that you mention it, I did hear an allusion to a journey to Belgium, only I did not associate it with you."

"Oh yes, I had intended to go."

"What, a lady to go alone among the *Boches?"*

"Yes, monsieur," she modestly replied. "I was going, and alone. Not for myself, but for France, the France that I love so well because it has been so good to me. But you will understand, you must have had experience of the stupid police in London, how they could bungle a delicate mission. Can you imagine that those clumsy men, who were ordered to put me on a boat which would take me to Amsterdam, actually put me on one going to Cadiz? They are not so gallant as the Paris police, and they certainly are not so intelligent. Imagine my predicament to arrive in Cadiz, where I was without friends or the means of reaching those who could aid me. Ah, those English police, they are sad bunglers."

It would have been more gallant for these two officers to have left Mata Hari to complete her toilette unobserved, but now that her unconcern had removed their embarrassment and the little party was on the friendliest footing, they returned to their resolution to watch any movement in order to guard against treachery. There was the danger that this attitude of indifference was an attempt to gain their confidence for the purpose of benefiting by it in some way. They decided against taking any chances. This situation was acceptable to Mata Hari. Thus the two police commissioners hovered anxiously over her toilette with the concern of wardrobe masters, doing their clumsy best to repair the absence of maids, while she prattled gaily of her misadventures. The police agent declares that she rather enjoyed the situation and the opportunity it offered of making favourable comparisons between the Paris and London police.

The amazing woman was so much the victim of her own self-confidence to control any situation in which she found herself, that she displayed no worry about the waiting interview which might have very inconvenient consequences. Having dressed with care, for she had now several acquaintances among the officers of the Second Bureau upon whom she wished to exercise her charms, she announced her readiness to accompany the two officers, who informed her that an official car was waiting.

The Second Bureau wanted to see Mata Hari for two reasons. One was that they were curious to have her explanation of the Belgian fiasco; the other was in relation to a radio message concerning the spy.

Both the airplane and the radio reached an advanced stage of development when they became adjuncts of war, but while full honours have been rendered the more spectacular weapon, no one has yet done justice to the romantic possibilities of radio's accomplishment. All we are concerned with here is its application in secret-service work and to Mata Hari in particular. Many American readers will recall the use made of the German-owned and controlled station at Sayville, on Long Island, which served for some time as the clearing-house for messages for both contestants. Less well known is the story of the telegraphic message which did so much to influence President Wilson in his determination to take an active part in the war.

In January, 1917, Herr Arthur Zimmermann, the German Secretary of State, addressed a message to the ambassador in Mexico, von Eckhardt, urging him to invite Mexico to enter into an alliance with Germany and to sound Japan upon the same project. As an inducement to produce the armed activity of Mexico against the United States, the German Minister suggested that the states of Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona should be her reward. By one of those curious lapses which are so unaccountable, this message was sent over cables that were known to be in possession of the British, but so absolute was their confidence in their ability to outwit the enemy that the German officials merely had the message transferred into their ordinary code, a code which the head of the secret service had previously warned them was wholly antiquated and no longer proof against interpretation. Unhappily for them, this code was known to the British.

As soon as the text was known it was submitted to Walter H. Page, then ambassador to the Court of Saint James's, who promptly sent it to President Wilson, at that time hovering on the brink of declaring war, but hoping against hope to maintain neutrality. With this effort to provoke trouble in his hands, American intervention was only a matter of time.

To finish with this story it is necessary to add that the British had to conceal from their enemy how this piece of information had come into the possession of the President. It became necessary to fabricate a story while the American authorities were endeavouring to prove the authenticity of the document. Acting upon information supplied by Mr. Page, United States agents "listened in" in Mexico City for the message (which had been purposely delayed in transmission), and when it was known that they had intercepted it, certain London papers that were known to be in demand in Germany, launched an attack on Sir Reginald Hall for allowing American agents to discover such invaluable information and for permitting it to escape the notice of the British Intelligence service. This rebuke, which was as severe as the censorship might allow, did not disturb Hall. He had written it himself.

Every combatant nation maintained its stations for the transmission and reception of messages and it soon became a desperate game to pick up one another's messages and to make what sense was possible from the information so collected. What each country wished to have accepted generally as its view of the situation was broadcast in plain language, so that its message was carried to the waiting world; but confidential matter which had to be conveyed to distant agents required great precaution so that none of the meaning should be apparent to enemies. Thus codes and ciphers were used. As we have seen, these were not always successful in maintaining secrecy. During the early stages of the war the British naval code was known to the German representatives in Washington and, by intercepting coded messages, they were able to inform their own naval units in southern seas of the favourable advantage in guns and position they possessed over a weak English squadron, which resulted in the latter being overtaken and defeated at the Coronel. Naturally the code was changed in its entirety after this and the possession of the German code enabled the British to turn the tables on their enemy in precisely the same manner at the battle of Falkland Islands.

Codes and ciphers have their dangers. There was an everlasting battle of wits between secret-service agents to obtain possession of these precious documents, and the war had not long been in progress when it was the proud boast of these services that each possessed a department which could unravel the most complicated message, if only they were given time. Stations like the Eiffel Tower would pick up the code messages cast into the air and promptly transmit them to decoding officers, who did their best (or worst) to find out what the messages contained. At times the results were startling.

The Eiffel Tower betrayed the work of more than one spy. There was, for instance, the brilliant young noncommissioned officer, Debrabant, who found life in the Intelligence department's offices too sedentary after service at the front. He pressed for more congenial employment where his taste for adventure might be gratified, and was sent to Barcelona to watch the operation of the German secret service there under Baron von Rolland. In that city he fell in love with a rich Andalusian widow, but, being a youth of spirit, he required to have money enough to keep him independent of her bounty. He was struck with the bright idea of selling his knowledge of the Intelligence work of the French, which he had gained at headquarters, to their enemies. This information was sent to Madrid and later radioed to Antwerp for necessary action. It was too late to prevent the death of thirteen agents which resulted from the betrayal, but the French were able to read these messages because they had become possessed of the key to the code which was used. Debrabant died a traitor's death in 1919.

It will be recalled that when Mata Hari was in Madrid she asked von Kroon to secure some money for her from her headquarters in Amsterdam for use in Paris. The naval *attaché* must have known that this message broadcast across France would be picked up at some stage of its journey, so he carefully coded the message to make it unintelligible to anyone who did not have the key. Unhappily for Mata Hari, the French did have the key.

It is not suggested that the rape of the code book was the result of any indiscretion on the part of Mata Hari's friend. The fault must be laid to one of his colleagues, and it makes an interesting story.

The French consul in San Sebastián earned the reputation of being the most enthusiastic user of photography during the war. Knowing that the German propaganda in neutral countries was directed from that town, he was determined to utilize the enemy's envoys as decoys to betray their agents. To further this purpose he conceived the idea of photographing all the visitors to their headquarters, and so he installed a photographic apparatus in the house immediately opposite that where the Germans worked. By this means he was able to furnish pictures of all the agents calling for instructions to the various branches of the counter-espionage service. The photographer, a very skilled young woman, was called into consultation by a man who had set himself the task of securing the German code books.

Had he simply stolen the book his work would have been greatly simplified, but its absence would have been immediately discovered and a new code substituted, thus defeating his purpose. In order to make a job of it he had to conduct the affair in such a way that the Germans would never suspect the book had been out of their possession. The task was more or less simplified by the use of standardized portfolios by the staff of the Embassy. One day an official had cause to pack the code book and some papers into one of these portfolios, which he proposed to take with him to his rooms to complete work after his office hours. On the way he met a friend who suggested that he accompany her to the house of mutual acquaintances, well known to the diplomat as favouring the Central Powers, who had been expecting a visit from him. Since there was ample time to finish his work after the call, the German envoy agreed to the suggestion and a near-by taxi was called. In accordance with his usual custom the diplomat, a man of considerable charm and popularity in Madrid, halted the taxi at a shop where he might buy some flowers to be presented as a peace offering to his hostess after his long absence.

The social call was without incident. Only, later in the evening when the diplomat was free to commence the work he had brought to his rooms he made the annoying discovery that the portfolio he had carried from the office was not the one which contained the papers he needed. Hastily telephoning the secretary on duty at the Embassy, he was told that his own portfolio was lying just where he had left it in his office. Naturally concluding that he had picked up the wrong portfolio, the diplomat made an exchange which enabled him to complete his work without any suspicion that the precious papers had ever been out of the possession of the Embassy staff, while, as a matter of fact, they had been photographed page by page during the interval of his entering the flower shop and the time the portfolio was discovered lying in his office.

How was it done? A minor official in the Embassy had been coaxed, bribed, or bullyragged into lending an Embassy portfolio stuffed with harmless routine documents to an audacious French agent who carried it for days on the seat of the taxi he was driving. He and his collaborator, the lady, had to wait patiently before they encountered the diplomat under quite the right conditions. At last the fates were kind in arranging the circumstances as they were required for the execution of the plan, with the one exception that the diplomat carried a leather case that contained only a few papers, whereas the portfolio to replace it was stuffed with them. There was barely time to reduce the bulging portfolio to satisfactory dimensions while the diplomat was buying flowers, and the taxi-driver was compelled to finish his journey sitting on a wad of loose papers which might easily have betrayed him. Having dropped his two passengers, the driver hurried back to within sight of the Embassy where the papers were all photographed before being returned (we do not know how) to the diplomat's office. It was intended, had the attempt proved a failure, to repeat it until the code book was found.

This was a very risky business, as too much was left to the fortuitous arrangement of circumstances, a great contrast to the classic example of "bag-snatching" carried out by the American agent, Houghton, in New York. Here the agent sat behind Dr. Albert, the commercial *attaché* at Washington, in the Subway, and relieved him of his portfolio and papers at the Fiftieth Street station. The same day the papers, which included the code books, were handed over to the New York police as having been "found" in the car. The papers were hastily photographed as soon as the owner was known!

When the Eiffel Tower picked up von Kroon's message, the decoding officers had their work very much simplified, and were able to inform the Second Bureau that the naval *attaché* in Madrid had requested the Amsterdam headquarters to furnish H21 with funds for her work in Paris, the money to be sent through the usual channels.

This telegram picked out of the air was the first piece of genuine orthodox evidence the Second Bureau had been able to collect against Mata Hari, and it was because of it that they wished to interview her.

When Police Commissioner Triolet arrived at the offices of the Second Bureau he heaved a sigh of relief at having successfully accomplished a delicate task. For some reason the police had a strong suspicion that Mata Hari meant mischief against herself in case of discovery, and it was because of this that they were so anxious to have her alive and well, for spies differ to this extent from Indians, the good ones live—and talk to their captors. Arrived at the Bureau, the police officer handed Mata Hari a folded paper of ominously legal aspect. It was the warrant for her arrest as a spy.

She never even glanced at it.

In the room to which she had been conducted were several officers, and thinking, from her experience of previous visits to the place, that the paper was merely authority to secure her admission to those closely guarded rooms, she asked the police officer:

"To which of these officers should I present this document?"

Anxious to return to aid in the fruitless search of her rooms, already begun at the moment of her departure, M. Triolet indicated the officer charged with the interrogation. Mata Hari approached him without hesitation and laid the warrant under his eyes. The surprised Captain Ledoux was not prepared for such amazing composure, so that he looked at the paper curiously, expecting something quite different. However, when he saw what it was he gravely motioned her to a seat, drew toward him a pad for making notes, and, preparing to write, said to her:

"Tell me how long you have been in the German secret service."

The shock of the unexpected blow stunned her. For a moment she rocked unsteadily in the chair and her face went livid. It was no longer the assured, audacious Mata Hari who looked with terrified eyes at the officer and whimpered:

"I . . . I do not understand."

"Tell me, H21, when you first became a spy in the enemy's pay."

With those words Mata Hari must have known that the career of the Red Dancer had drawn to its close. Now, nothing remained except the spy H21.

That night the woman who had loved luxury as the Sybarite who complained that he could not sleep because of a fold in a rose-leaf on his couch, tossed feverishly on the hard bed in a cell of the prison of Saint-Lazare.

Chapter Fifteen

THE TIME HAD NOW COME WHEN MATA HARI had to answer for her crime before her judges, brother officers of the men whom she had sent to their deaths in hundreds; her soul and mind is to be revealed with the same degree of thoroughness as she had so frequently chosen to unveil her beautiful body, which had become famous in all the European capitals. It was inevitable that her reputation should have preceded her to the bar of justice, for some of her judges, at least, must have known her as a "star" of the vaudeville stage, a woman who had led the gay roistering life of an artist without respect for honour, modesty, or decency. They must have experienced in some degree the magnetic charm which had enslaved other men and have wondered by what extraordinary twist of fortune's wheel she had been induced to accept employment as a spy. Yet the shades of thought that interest moralists in laying bare the motives of a mind received no consideration by the Third Court-Martial. They were concerned with facts, and facts are stubborn things.

Herein lies one of the main complaints of those who seek to palliate her offence. One of her most passionate defenders, Señor Gomez Carrillo, in his *Le mystère de la vie et de la mort de Mata Hari,* has candidly admitted that he believes her to have been guilty of the charge of espionage and intelligence with the enemy, but in contesting every point which indicates her guilt he submits an impassioned plea for her point of view as a neurotic and perverted debauchée, as though that were an adequate defence for the crime of betraying innocent men to their deaths. Almost simultaneously come the more subtle efforts of the German sympathizers to canonize her as a martyr to their cause. The German authorities have every reason to feel grateful to Mata Hari for her devotion to duty. When a spy's life is judged entirely by the measure of achievement, then Mata Hari is fully entitled to a high reputation in her profession. It is when her life is compared with others' whose hands are not blood-stained and who are innocent of treachery that one must enter a protest against the attribution of qualities to a spy's duties which not only fail to rehabilitate Mata Hari, but which lead to a complete misconception of the work she performed.

In order to cultivate a sympathetic public for their accomplished spy, the Germans have compared Mata Hari to one of the victims of their wrath, Miss Edith Cavell. There can be no comparison, only contrast. Mata Hari was accused of spying, with having caused the deaths of many men. Competent French authorities declare the losses which can be attributed directly to her intrigues amounted to nearly 50,000 men. Edith Cavell was charged with harbouring refugees, not with spying; she was charged with saving lives, not with taking them. If there is any possible defence for the actions of a spy it is that motives of patriotism prompted him to undertake a dangerous work against an enemy power. Since Mata Hari was the native of a state which never entered the war, and since she cloaked her actions under the guise of a neutral, no motive of patriotism can be advanced in her favour.

Should there be any suspicion that her judges were actuated by animosity, let it be said that she was treated throughout the trial with a courtesy which one would expect any lady would receive from men who were gentlemen by instinct. If the accused resented some of the questions asked concerning her relations with men, it must be recalled that the character of courtesan was her chosen line of defence. The investigators were remorseless in their pursuit of the truth, but at no stage of the

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trial did the accused woman or her lawyer protest against the injustice she is alleged to have encountered. There were times when she pleaded with her judges, but it was a plea for men to treat a woman with gallantry, not because they were being unjust or because she wished to have their justice tempered with mercy. The terrible Mornay, special scourge of traitors and spies, did rouse her to anger at one stage of the trial, but that was because of his keen scent for the truth which underlay an ambiguous statement.

It is a generally accepted fact that when a person is wrongfully accused of spying, the nation for whom he is alleged to be working will generously make some confidential representations to secure his release. No country tries to save its own spies; those unhappy creatures, when caught, are left to stew in their own juice. But a wrongfully accused person who has no friends among the other nations can always secure the support of his own country's representatives. It was, for example, very much to the disadvantage of Dreyfus that no foreign country interposed on his behalf or denied the accusation that he had spied in their interests; in the eyes of many well-informed people that omission was conclusive evidence of guilt apart from any further evidence. Nor did anyone arise to protect

Mata Hari until after her conviction, and then the utmost her friends attempted was to beg for a mitigation of sentence. At no time did she make any request to the Minister of the Low Countries for assistance. Such an application would have obtained an immediate response, since it was well known that she was the mistress of the chief of the Dutch Cabinet.

Instead, her defence was undertaken voluntarily by a well-known French advocate, Maître Clunet, who enjoyed a reputation as a legal scholar that extended beyond the frontiers of his own country. Maître Clunet asked to be entrusted with the defence of the spy. For personal reasons he was judged to be the most suitable lawyer for the task; it was rare for criminals of Mata Hari's class to have such a highly qualified advocate. He was a man of considerable charm of manner, an urbane disposition, and was a venerable figure with his snow-white hair. The medal of the 1870 campaign which he wore must have appealed to the military men who formed the court and ensured for him the respect which a veteran invariably receives from the younger men of his profession. When Mata Hari was at the height of her beauty and power Maître Clunet had fallen in love with her and for some time they had been on terms of intimate friendship. Now at the age of seventy-five he was still under the influence of this early infatuation. The story of their ill-omened love-affair may be read in Charles Hirsch's excellent romance, *La chèvre aux pieds d'or,* where the story is sympathetically treated and the noble character of the aged lawyer is shown to its fullest advantage. Never for a single moment did Maître Clunet surrender the belief that he could obtain the release of his client. He persisted in this belief even when an impassioned appeal to his intimate personal friend, President Poincaré, had failed, and, unfortunately, his fervid advocacy finally reached the point when it furnished a ludicrous anticlimax to the trial.

The Third Court-Martial sat in the Court of Assizes. The president was a venerable warrior of some distinction, Colonel Sempron, formerly commander of the Garde Républicaine. The sittings were held behind closed doors, the delicate nature of the evidence making absolute secrecy a necessity. Even the sentries set to guard the doors were not permitted to approach nearer than ten paces. Only the members of the court, the prosecutor, defender, one other officer, and the guard accompanying the prisoner were admitted to the room in addition to the witnesses. The "one other officer" was Major Massard, of the General Staff, who was later charged with the sensational execution of the spy. It is to him that we are largely indebted for these facts relating to the trial given in his *Espionnes de Paris,* and it may be said that no other authentic account of the evidence has been given because it necessarily dealt with certain events upon which the French authorities prefer to maintain silence. No secret service cares to expose its methods. Then again, there were several people whose indiscretions did not amount to treachery, but who were entangled in the skein of intrigue and love-affairs and who are thus spared the humiliation inflicted upon those who were associated with the spy's life.

The maintenance of this secrecy ensured an absolute silence in the large room. Indeed, the court with its dust-covered benches, intended to accommodate a large audience, seemed strangely remote from the noises of man's world. It was as though the trial had been transported to the realm of ideal justice. Into this silent chamber two gendarmes led their prisoner to face the charge of intelligence with the enemy, which is the legal expression for spying. Major Massard describes her on this occasion as being rather tall and slender, her clear-cut face assuming a sour and disagreeable expression when she was hard pressed, which neutralized the effect of her regular features and the lovely periwinkle-blue eyes, the eyes that were physically beautiful but morally terrible. In her blue dress, cut to a low point, a coquettish three-cornered hat of military cut, she lacked nothing of elegance, but, what surprised the onlooker, this professional dancer was not remarkable for grace. He describes her as German in manner as well as in heart. But everyone who saw her was struck with the attitude of resolution with which she faced her judges and the high intelligence which she displayed during the course of the trial. She had a ready reply for every question, denying only the motives ascribed to actions which she admitted performing. When compared to Messalina she displayed no umbrage; she gloried in her vice of passion. Closely adhering to the accepted course of conduct popular with the spies of the time, she boldly proclaimed her defence and stuck to it tenaciously. A courtesan, yes; a spy, no. If she had been compelled to act suspiciously at times, it was because she had to protect the identity of the men who entered into relations with her. Mata Hari was not merely frank; she was proud of her highly placed lovers and the generous manner in which they treated her.

Addressing the officer-judges she told of visiting army manœuvres in Silesia, France, and Italy in the company of high officers, perhaps with the object of impressing the court with the importance of her friends as compared with their own subordinate grades. But this professional pride was misplaced. Army manœuvres are no place for a woman of refinement or delicacy to go holiday-making, as these men very well knew.

"On the day war was declared," said the president of the court, "you had luncheon with the chief of police in Berlin and afterwards accompanied him on a tour through the city, where you received the acclamations of the crowd."

"That is quite true," admitted Mata Hari. She then gave the explanation of her meeting with this official, who came to inspect her theatrical costume which had been reported insufficient.

"Then a short while afterwards you entered the secret service. The chief of that service sent you on a confidential mission to Paris, providing you with 30,000 marks, and designating you with the symbol H21."

"It is true," the dancer conceded, "that I received a 'baptismal' name by which I could correspond with my friend, and the sum you mention. But those 30,000 marks were not my salary as a spy, they were the price of my favours, for I was the mistress of the chief of the espionage service."

"Yes, we know that. But the officer appears to have been unusually generous."

"Thirty-thousand, generous! It was my price; my lovers never offered me less."

She was then asked about her journey to Paris and the reasons for it, but she held to the story which she had given at the time to obtain her passports, the need for removing her furniture from Neuilly. This was interrupted by her journey to Vittel, where, she admitted, her residence was purely private and had not been made necessary through service in a hospital.

With these officers who were her judges Mata Hari frequently tried to find a weak spot and to play on it. They were all soldiers, men who must have been easily touched by this devotion to a victim of the war, and as Frenchmen they could not fail to respond to her romantic renunciation of a wasted life. This one true sensation of her heart's love might have gained sympathy had there been any supporting evidence to prove her sincerity, but, the fortunate explanation of her residence in Vittel having served its purpose, it was promptly abandoned. Neither Mata Hari nor her defender made any effort to explain why she renounced this laudable intention in favour of resuming her gay life. Such an omission was a grave error, for it was pointed out that her departure from Vittel corresponded with the completion of the two tasks she had been sent to perform for the benefit of the German espionage service. Within that fair bosom must have been a heart, resolute, indomitable, devoid of any weak scruple.

On the subject of correspondence with the enemy she contradicted herself as she did in private conversation in order to make her utterances suit the various occasions. The president presented a terrible indictment of her treachery at Vittel, charging her with communicating to Abteilung III the intelligence which she had gathered from indiscreet officers, concerning the dropping of French agents behind the German lines.

"It is true," she admitted, "that I corresponded with my lover, who was no longer in Berlin, but in Amsterdam. It was no fault of mine that he was chief of the espionage department, but I did not communicate anything to him."

"When you were at the front you had knowledge of the preparations which were being made for the offensive," charged the president in a grave tone.

"I knew from some of my officer friends that something was in course of preparation, certainly. But even if I had wished I could not have informed the Germans. I did not warn them because I could not."

This was a strange statement after she had just admitted being in correspondence with the head of the secret service in Amsterdam. But, with her, duty and falsehood were synonymous; such irreconcilable statements were not matters of consequence to her, and she appeared to think that they should not have weighed with the judges.

Then the president, very grave now that he was approaching the fatal proofs, questioned Mata Hari on her correspondence with her daughter through the diplomatic mail of the neutral Legation.

"I have written, I admit it," she says with candour, an admission that any mother might be proud to make. "But I sent no information of military matters."

"We have proof to the contrary. We know also to whom you sent it."

This was the first hint allowed to fall which indicated the full extent of the Second Bureau's knowledge of her activities. Mata Hari grew pale and made no effort to insist upon her innocent intentions. Instead she shifted her ground adroitly.

"Certainly, a woman of the theatres as I am cannot fail to attract attention. It is natural. Some one must have been following me."

Mata Hari was not easily disconcerted. In spite of the gravity of the accusations brought against her she retained her serenity except on such occasions as this, and then her replies had a touch of asperity, her looks became harsh and distrustful, and her gestures too theatrical. But on the whole she successfully maintained the character of her defence. Only when some wholly unexpected revelation caused a momentary consternation did she lose her studied pose. The moment when the president revealed the secret of her correspondence was one when Mata Hari was nonplussed and fenced wildly with her opponent.

She was next examined upon her reasons for volunteering to enter the French secret service, and the replies at least show that she had no scruple about betraying her friends, either French or German.

"There was nothing extraordinary in offering to be useful to France," she contended. "I was very well placed to do so with my useful associations. Besides, I had no money."

"Your German friends soon sent you 10,000 marks through the neutral Legation," suggested Lieutenant Mornay.

"That money was from my friend."

Again it is worthy of comment that she can or cannot communicate with her German lover, just as it suits the convenience of the moment. In making this sharp retort to the president of the court Mata Hari betrayed signs of anger. Perhaps it was because a moment earlier she had boasted that this man never offered her less than 30,000 marks.

"From your friend, the head of the espionage service," was Mornay's dry comment. "Finally, you became a spy in the service of France. What did you do?"

"I gave information to the chief of the Second Bureau concerning the places on the Moroccan coast where submarines landed arms, information that was very useful and very important. . . ."

"And where did you obtain that information?" asked the president. "If it was correct it shows that you were in direct communication with the enemy; if it was false, you were deceiving us."

This time the dancer was completely disconcerted. In trying to explain the inexplicable she stammered inconclusive suggestions. She had heard about it at a diplomatic dinner where she was dancing, but she could not say where it was nor who had inadvertently betrayed this important confidential information, which most certainly should not have been known to any neutral diplomatist in Paris. Realizing that her perplexity and evasions were creating a bad impression, Mata Hari lost her temper again. Flushed with anger, she flashed back at Colonel Sempron:

"After all, I did what I could for France. My information was good. . . . I am not French. . . . I owe you nothing. . . . You are only trying to confuse me. . . . I am only a poor woman, and for officers you are lacking in gallantry."

Mornay bowed gravely to the accused and murmured, "Madame must forgive us; we are only defending our country."

The dancer was obviously disquieted by this shrewd attack, but after a moment's reflection she tried to dissimulate her unrest by arrogantly retorting:

"I am neither French nor German, but belong to a neutral country. You are persecuting me, you are unjust, and, I repeat, you are not gallant." She regarded Mornay for a moment while her lips curled with scorn before saying, bitterly, "Oh, but that man is horrid."

"Calm yourself, madame," Colonel Sempron suggested, and having given the accused time to

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recover her composure, he continued: "Captain Ledoux gave you a document which you were to carry to one of our agents in Belgium. What did you do with that paper?"

The accused did not answer.

The president pressed for a reply: "Do you recall to what use you put the paper confided to you for transmission to our agent?"

"No," was the dull response.

One of the members of the court-martial says that he does not think Mata Hari had fully recognized her danger until the moment when this reluctant monosyllable was forced from her lips.

That seems quite probable, for the spy must have seen that a great pit was opening at her feet. It will strike the reader that it is inconceivable that an accomplished spy should be unprepared for this emergency. Her entire conduct over the abortive mission to Belgium is incomprehensible without the full knowledge of her subsequent activity. The truth is that Mata Hari was placed in an exceedingly difficult position. Had she sought the assistance of the French military mission in London when her further progress was checked, she must have been required to produce the document she was carrying as proof of her good faith; the Second Bureau should have had that paper restored to them when her mission had failed. The absolute necessity of preserving intact such an important paper as a list of spies operating in a foreign country is too obvious to merit emphasis. Unhappily for her, we know that she had dispatched this precious document to the German officials in Amsterdam before she left France, and the French secret service knew that it had passed out of her possession. It was for this reason that they had recommended her to apply to the French mission in London if she should desire assistance, knowing all the while that she lacked the proof of her identity as a French agent.

Had Mata Hari claimed any recollection of disposing of this paper she would have been immediately involved in a terribly tortuous path of untruth to explain why she had not used it to identify herself in London. Complete loss of memory was the only defence, inadequate as it was. Mata Hari, then, denied knowledge of the precious document committed to her charge. The president proceeded to enlighten her.

"That agent to whom you had to report was arrested in Brussels by the Germans, and three weeks after your departure from Paris he was shot."

It is obvious that at this stage of the examination the judges must have reached a reasonably sure belief that Mata Hari was guilty of the charge brought against her. To increase their conviction they now witnessed the complete overthrow of her assurance. They saw her hesitations, her stammered replies, her loss of confidence, as the president and the relentless Mornay sought to wring the truth from her. In spite of all their efforts, however, it was not possible to extract any confession. Beyond a refusal to recall what she had done with this paper she could not be induced to go.

Then they questioned her about her stay in Madrid.

"In Madrid you occupied the room next to that of the chief of the espionage service in that city."

"That is so," she acknowledged.

"This agent from Berlin paid you frequent visits?"

"That also is true."

"Did you receive gifts from him?"

"Certainly. He was my lover."

She was on surer ground now.

"You know and we know that your messages to your German lover in Amsterdam were signed by the spy-signature H21."

"That is not correct," was the quick retort. It will be recalled that Mata Hari had already admitted that she used this symbol so that she could communicate with this man who, "through no fault" of hers, was head of an espionage department.

"Pardon me, madame, it is correct and the proof of it is in the telegram which the German agent in Madrid sent to his colleague in Amsterdam asking for money to be paid to H21 through the Ministry of a neutral country."

This was the only time when Mata Hari came near to a complete breakdown. The knowledge that the French were aware of the existence of this telegram caused the bold front to collapse. The woman who had been imperturbable through a severe examination became a frightened creature with haggard eyes and tightened lips from which words came shrilly and brokenly. She floundered pitifully. Maître Clunet felt compelled to interpose to rescue his client.

"All that proves nothing," objected the venerable lawyer, frightened by the effect of this blow on his old lover.

"I tell you . . . I . . . It was for . . . it was to pay for our intimacy. It is . . . it is my price. . . . Oh, you gentlemen of France, believe me! Be gallant!"

Maître Clunet became alarmed at the state of his trembling client, and the poor man, forgetting his function as defender of an accused spy, became once again the loving protector of a lovely woman threatened with disaster. He solicitously offered her a bottle of smelling-salts and a box of chocolates which he had thoughtfully provided in his distracted efforts to offer her consolation.

"I have no need of those," cried Mata Hari, harshly, in repulsing him. "I am not a child. I shall be brave."

Then she faced the court defiantly.

"You cannot deny," said the president when she was somewhat recovered, "that you went to the Legation and collected the sum which Lieutenant von Kroon had promised you."

"What is the use of denying it?" answered the accused, recovering her composure when on the more familiar ground of a much-loved artist. "Lieutenant von Kroon did not wish to pay for my caresses with his own money; he found it more convenient to pay in the money of his government."

"The court will accept that statement for what it is worth," commented Colonel Sempron, drily. "You acknowledge that the money came from the chief of the German espionage service in Holland?"

"Certainly. The money came from my lover in

Holland, who paid, without knowing it, the debts of my lover in Spain."

Maître Clunet was much disturbed over these inaccurate replies. As a lawyer he was conscious of the irreconcilable replies Mata Hari was giving in her efforts to extricate herself from the impasse into which she had been driven. How to reconcile her declaration that von Kroon was paying his debts with government money with that in which she said that her German lover was paying for the pleasantries of his colleague in Spain? The court closed its first session at this stage. During the recess the old advocate who was protecting his lover went about trying to find how his case stood in the eyes of those who had heard it. The prospect was bad. But he did not lose courage. When Major Massard was invited to give an opinion he said, brusquely:

"I think she is nothing but a clever hussy and that she is done for."

The lawyer would not confess defeat. He never lacked confidence until the bitter end.

"Wait," he said—"wait until you have heard the witnesses I shall call. But wait most especially for my address to the court."

So far Mata Hari had borne herself with considerable credit except for those one or two deviations from her haughty air and that moment when she almost collapsed when the president of the court revealed the extent of the Second Bureau's knowledge of her activities. As each successive blow fell upon her head the lawyer would turn upon her the eyes of a faithful but powerless friend, as though apologizing for his lack of influence to save her pain. The accused merely shrugged her shoulders and pouted with annoyance. On the other hand, she was lavish with amiable words and provoking glances for the benefit of the two simple gendarmes who guarded her.

When the court reassembled to hear her defence and Mata Hari heard that some of her influential friends had acceded to her request to give evidence on her behalf, she gaily resumed all her coquettish art. Having taken her place at the bar, she energetically wielded a lipstick, powdered herself, joyfully accepted a small bouquet from the adoring advocate, and decorated her corsage with a flower. She was happy and smiling again, nourishing some secret hope. If Maître Clunet had discussed the case with her during the recess it is certain that he had imparted his own optimism to the client. The discarded chocolates were produced and the accused munched contentedly. All the ravishing glances of which she was capable were launched against the judges as they took their seats, it is even insinuated that at an unguarded moment she smiled brightly upon the terrible Mornay.

And the witnesses?

The first was he who had been her first lover when she came to France, Jules Cambon the chief of the permanent staff of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He was a typical diplomatist, suave, confident, and distinguished, but for the moment so embarrassed that, in addressing him, Mata Hari did so with averted eyes so that she might spare him further discomfort.

"Why have you called this witness?" asked the presiding officer.

Without moving, without looking at the witness, Mata Hari said in her alluring low voice:

"Monsieur occupies one of the highest offices in France. He is acquainted with all the intentions of government and with the projected military operations. After my return from Madrid I met him again. He was my first friend after I was divorced and it was only natural that I should meet him again with joy. We passed three days and nights together. Today I have but one question to ask him: Did I at any time enquire for information, have I ever profited from our intimacy to extract from him any secret?"

"Madame never put to me any such question," answered the witness.

"You see," interrupted the impassioned defence lawyer, "she is no spy. Had she wished to gather precious information she had but to reach out her hand."

"Then what did you find to talk about for three whole days?" asked the somewhat incredulous president. "When the nation is at open war did you not even mention the subject which occupies every heart and mind? That is unbelievable."

"Unbelievable but, nevertheless, true. We spoke about art—Indian art."

A gleam of hope flashed across the eyes of the accused, who got consolation from this statement which did little credit to the sense of responsibility in a man who had now been nominated to the post of ambassador.

"Let us admit that," said Mornay. "But you will acknowledge that the accused is intelligent enough to recognize that it is not so easy to lead by the nose an important diplomatist as it is to manage young officers who are drunk with love and kisses and incapable of refusing anything to an illustrious artist. You must acknowledge that her ability to approach such a high official gave the accused great credit with the *Boches.* It has been said that some of the paper on which Mata Hari wrote to her friends in Madrid and Amsterdam was headed 'Ministry of Foreign Affairs—Office of the Minister.' There is no doubt that this important association was the means of obtaining for her the very high payment she received. By exhibiting herself to other spies in the company of the illustrious statesman who appears at the bar she surrounded herself with an aureole of power which allowed her to be more exacting."

When asked if he had anything to add to his statement, the witness replied, "Nothing has arisen to alter my good opinion of the lady."

Nevertheless, his relief at being released from further examination was obvious. His face had grown pale as Mornay began to speak, as though he feared pressure on other matters not altogether related to his affectionate regard for his friend. He was still a gentleman, however, for as he left the witness stand the ambassador bowed in his stately way to the delighted dancer, whose face, it is said, bore the unmistakable expression of pride which might have been forgiven any young lady who was modestly acknowledging that she had "landed" an ambassador.

The next evidence was productive of a characteristic incident. General Messimy, the former Minister of War, had been one of the numerous victims who succumbed to the lure of the Red Dancer. He was no longer Minister. His duty as a local commander kept him on the scene of operations, so that his evidence took the form of a sworn statement which declared that the accused had never asked questions relating to the conduct of the war nor had ever addressed to him an enquiry which could have aroused suspicion. The president of the court was then about to read a letter which he held in his hand, when Mata Hari leaped to her feet with a startled exclamation:

"Do not read that letter, *Monsieur le colonel."*

"I must do so," he protested.

"Then I beg you not to make known the name of the writer," she persisted.

"And why not?"

"Because the writer is married and I have no wish to be the cause of a drama in a virtuous family. Do not pronounce the name, I beg of you."

The colonel was an old colleague of General Messimy, he was something of a family friend, and he would gladly have spared a former Minister the humiliation of associating his name with a letter which, as evidence, could only have been of value in a breach-of-promise case. The old general had written of his deep love and of intimate things with the gusto and abandon of a young man enduring the transports of first love. But as Colonel Sempron hesitated, another member of the court rose in his seat and requested that the letter be read in full, together with the writer's name. Reminded of his duty, the colonel began to read, and Mata Hari relinquished her protest with a little pout of dissatisfaction. Until the presiding officer read the signature of the letter none of the other members of the court had apparently known of the liaison between their former chief and the dancer, for the revelation caused them to regard one another with looks of stupefaction. The former Minister of War! The old dugout who had frustrated plans of abler men and who had been kicked out of office to make way for a more intelligent and active soldier, had been carrying on an intrigue with one of the enemy's agents! These irreverent young officers could not wholly conceal their glee at the astounding announcement. But Mata Hari had felt that General Messimy's name would impress them and his evidence remedy the unpleasant effect of the ambassador's testimony. When she saw the smiles of amusement on the faces of her judges she could not refrain from a petulant outburst which betrayed her annoyance.

"You are very indiscreet, messieurs."

"It is to be understood, then, that you never spoke of the war to the Minister?"

"Never," was the emphatic reply.

This was the last of the influential men who bore testimony to her character; the remainder of the witnesses were domestics who spoke feelingly of her customary kindness and charity, declaring for the most part that it was inconceivable that a woman of such kindness of heart could have engaged in the vile practice of spying. Before leaving the high officials, however, let us say that it was clear that they had not been engaged in treacherous acts either by intent or otherwise. Indiscreet, infatuated, foolish they may have been, but not to the extent of having engaged in a conspiracy against their country. But, as Mornay suggested, it is impossible to deny that their friendship had been of incalculable value to the spy. During the course of little more than a year it is known that Mata Hari received between $12,000 and $15,000 for her services to Abteilung III. When one recalls the pitifully small sums paid to other agents, this was royal compensation and shows the value of her labour on behalf of the enemy.

The appearance of the ambassador and the evidence of the former Minister had done nothing to strengthen the case in Mata Hari's favour. The old advocate then declared the case closed and began his address. What he said has never been divulged. Only a few indications of the impassioned nature of his speech for the defence have leaked out from that silent grey room. The evidence presented by the commissioner for the government was irrefutable. Naturally it has been impossible to reproduce here all the evidence which was laid before the court. Much of it will never be made public, at least during the present generation, because reputations, both national and individual, were jeopardized. The Second Bureau have their own reasons for reticence, and state reasons have made it imperative not to reveal the whole mass of evidence which was accumulated against this dangerous woman.

The line of defence adopted by the incontestably great master of the bar was not convincing. He alone seems to have preserved an inflexible assurance that his client was innocent and to have hoped, by eloquently expressing his conviction, to convey the same impression to others. To parade her lovers in order to obtain a reluctant confession of their failure to resist the charms of the Circe was not a convincing manner to rebut the incriminating knowledge marshalled by the implacable Mornay.

Mata Hari had been notorious in Paris for many years, and to be known and recognized in that city is to be exposed to the malicious gossip of the most brilliant and most pitiless press of the world. The weekly journals, notably the *Cri de Paris,* had frequently commented upon her love-affairs, delighting in mocking each new victim of her charms as he was discarded in favour of a successful rival. The old lawyer, who preserved the memory of her charm and perfidy, was chivalrous enough to protect her with his eloquence. His devotion was worthy of a better cause. So hopelessly weak was the case that it illustrates the inability of indubitably meritorious advocacy without good material to support it.

We repeat, in his final plea Maître Clunet was unconvincing. He barely touched upon the nature of the evidence, confining himself to a moving appeal on behalf of a woman who had sacrificed her beauty, her talents, and her art to the cultivation of vice and crime. He pictured her unhappy married life, the persecution by a wretched husband, and her efforts to obtain a living by her art with all the forceful presentation of an eloquence which had commanded admiration for twenty years. But the defects of the woman could not mitigate the guilt of the spy. In this case to know all was not to forgive all, as the advocate hoped. The effect of his long plea on those who heard it was most clearly defined upon the subject of his address. The accused composed herself, face and figure, in a theatrical attitude when the lawyer reached the highest flight of his fervent oratory. In this final act of the drama she skilfully displayed all the strange charm which had made men her foolish slaves; she ceased to be the accused struggling to prove her innocence, in order to become a fascinating woman and a talented artist.

"Have you anything to add to your defence?" asked the presiding officer when the address was finished.

"Nothing. My advocate has told you the truth," she replied. "I am not French. I have the right to have friends in other countries, even among those at war with France. I have remained neutral. I count upon the goodness of heart of you French officers."

The advocate was so touched by the moving effect of this simple statement that he effusively seized her hand and expressed his admiration.

The case was complete, the members of the court filed out to the retiring-room where they were to discuss their verdict. Mata Hari was not present at this consultation. After an absence of ten minutes they were ready with their decision. To each officer in turn, beginning with the youngest, lest his opinion be influenced by the example of his seniors, the president addressed the question:

"In your soul and in your conscience are you convinced that this woman is guilty of having communicated information and documents to the enemy, and of having caused the death of many of our soldiers?"

Very calmly and without hesitation each officer replied, "Yes."

As the members of the court signed the judgment, one of them threw down the pen and exclaimed, passionately:

"It is horrible to condemn to death, in the possession of all her beauty and charm, a creature who is so seductive and of such fine intelligence. But her treacherous intrigues have caused such calamities that, if it lay within my power, I would have her shot a dozen times."

It is not customary in a French court-martial to have the verdict announced to the prisoner by the court. That is done by a court attendant. The old lawyer's training had enabled him to grasp the attitude of the judges toward his client when they left to consider their verdict, and he cautioned Mata Hari that she must be prepared for the worst. When at last the little ceremony of reading the sentence was carried out, Maître Clunet wept unashamed. The guard was called out and Mata Hari set before them.

"Judgment in the name of the French people!" cried the official, using the time-honoured formula.

"Present arms!"

As the sentence of death was read to her in the fading light of a pleasant June evening did the Red Dancer hear, from the shades of desolation and terror, the ghostly tread of marching feet as a phantom army paraded, that army which had gone loyally to its death at her behest, while she, in listless ease, lingered among the garlands of flowers in the rooms of her wealthy adorers? At the rattle of arms brought briskly to the salute, breaking the solemn warm stillness of the late afternoon, did she recall the sight of thousands of troops saluting her royal lover as she stepped from her carriage on his arm? Then must she have thought of the serried ranks which soon might salute her soul as it sped to Siva's hell, their vengeance at last achieved.

It was a pathetic scene. The old advocate, defeated in his most delicate case, stood with tears streaming from his weakening eyes. And Mata Hari? Does she cry aloud or faint or betray any signs of feminine weakness? Silent, serene, almost indifferent, she listened to the crisp sentence of the official who read her death warrant. An enigmatic smiled played about the sensuous lips until the words had ceased, and then, realizing that she was about to die, she turned away, nervously biting her lips.

"My God! she knows how to die, that one!" was the admiring comment of an old soldier of the guard.

Chapter Sixteen

CELL NO. 12 AT THE PRISON OF SAINT-LAZARE, which Mata Hari occupied, had acquired a certain notoriety in French criminal records. Mme. Steinheil and Mme. Caillaux had previously been tenants. It is a large room with two windows and three beds, one for the prisoner and two for the religious Sisters whose duty it was to guard her. None of the distinguished occupants of the cell brought to it one half the romance that Mata Hari invested in that drab interior. Almost from the moment she entered the cell there were sinister rumours of the contemplated efforts of either her admirers or her secret-service colleagues to secure her escape if the imposing list of her notable lovers failed to move the President to act within his powers of clemency. It is possible to see in Mata Hari's conduct during her imprisonment a firm conviction that some power, working outside the gaol, would bring about a mitigation of the death penalty.

During the trial she had succeeded in preserving a courageous exterior which had surprised and impressed those who witnessed it; secretly she was haunted by the fear of death. In spite of her uttered words, which were but a faint echo of the pessimistic philosophy that despises life, the awful consequences of an adverse judgment shook the very foundations of her faith. Her outer courage was based upon an unwavering faith in the legion of admiring friends whipped up by her adoring advocate, who never for one moment doubted his ability to organize a mass of influential opinion strong enough to secure a revocation of the sentence of death. This steadfast devotion to a wisp of hope never left either the condemned or her defender. Presently we shall see something of the methods instituted to obtain her release, but let us for the moment consider the testimony of a man who had the Red Dancer under close observation during the time of her imprisonment.

Dr. Bralez, the assistant prison doctor, says of her:

"If you ask whether I thought her guilty, I should be compelled to answer 'Yes, against my will.' It does not seem logical to me that a creature of her nature, with her pride, her imagination, her love of art, her beauty, her culture, and her contempt for money could debase herself to the point of seducing drunken aviators to betray secrets of military importance. However, there is no doubt that the evidence before the court-martial was too strong for her defence. I recall paying her a visit on the day the death sentence was read to her. I can assure you that her calm, her indifference, amazed me. Had I been her confessor I should have been tempted to sound the depths of her soul and offer her the consolation of faith, but my rôle was merely that of medical adviser and for that reason I was compelled to maintain a reserved attitude."

Mata Hari's only request was for some veronal to enable her to sleep, but this the doctor had to refuse, and two days later he was surprised to observe that she had no need for the drug, for her nights were no longer disturbed by the perspective of a sinister termination to the tragedy in which she was compromised. Dr. Bralez repudiates the statement that she was like a caged panther; he protested that there was nothing cruel about her, although she loved to surround herself with an atmosphere of savage instinct. Nevertheless, this opinion was very different from that formed by the Sisters of Mercy who were her guardians. In the early days of her prison life they found Mata Hari intractable, imperious, excited, feverish, full of the craziest notions for indulging her luxury-softened body. Not only was her temper violent, but her demands for ministering to her personal service were absurd. She demanded maids to attend to her toilette; at one time she insisted upon having a daily bath in milk when it was almost impossible to obtain that precious fluid for the young babies in Paris. But that was a detail when her own comfort was concerned.

Later she became more tractable and reasonable. This was when her friends were occupied with the efforts to secure her release or at least a mitigation of the sentence. Maître Clunet was the main prop of her earlier hopes, although, as we shall see, not the only one. He had two sources from which he drew an inexhaustible supply of hope with which he nourished Mata Hari's emotions. Fear of a criminal's death compelled her to hope. Doubtless her fervid imagination had pictured some romantic tragedy which would provide a fitting climax to a life filled with the dramatic, whereas the prospect of a judicial execution is shorn of any impressive details upon which the romantic mind can feed. The first instrument that the lawyer employed was an imposing array of powerful friends who were marshalled behind an appeal for clemency. Her royal lovers, the great officials, artists who failed to understand why crimes against humanity could possibly weigh against the divinity of inspired art, scholars whose imaginations dominated their intellects—all responded to the invitation to sign a plea for mercy. Her love-affairs organized themselves into a procession to plead against her condemnation as a spy.

But there were some notable omissions from the list of advocates for mercy. In spite of the strong persuasion of her consort, himself a German princeling, Queen Wilhelmina of Holland refused to do for her own subject what she did so willingly for Miss Edith Cavell. Other signatories to the petition for the English nurse who declined to subscribe to the plea for Mata Hari were His Holiness the Pope, King Alfonso, and the head of the American mission.

After having enjoyed the distinction of royal favours granted by the Prussian Crown Prince and after the Duke of Brunswick had showered gold upon her, Mata Hari, temporarily, as was her custom, bestowed her affections upon the head of the council of her own country, Van der Linden, who addressed an eloquent plea on behalf of his distressed mistress to President Poincaré. When this was rejected he heaped insult after insult upon the French people, calling them savages and barbarians for proposing to execute the talented artist whose companionship he had enjoyed. These protests, coming from a Dutch source, provoked many a grim smile in France, but the insults made but little impression. Had Van der Linden made some effort to check the audacity of the innumerable German secret-service agents operating in his country, the effect of his plea might have been different.

The second hope upon which Maître Clunet's activities were directed, should the first fail, was his personal friendship for the most powerful friend he had, the President. We do not pretend to know what transpired between the President and the lawyer at their interview. The only thing that is known is that President Poincaré had to listen to an eloquent petition made the more moving by the obvious sincerity of the man whose great intellect was for the time being completely absorbed with the object of his former love. It has been said on good authority that the dramatically powerful interview recorded in Hirsch's *La chèvre aux pieds d'or* is substantially a correct reproduction of what took place.

But if Maître Clunet's attitude leaves any room for doubt, that of the President must have been crystal clear. Owing to the genial ineptitude of M. Malvy's administration in office during the first two years of war, the soil of France had produced a crop of conspiracies amounting in substance to a state of internal corruption from which few modern democracies could have emerged without being shattered to their very foundations. Within a few months were uncovered the Invalides plot, the Bonnet Rouge crimes, the mysterious death of Almereyda before his treacherous conspiracy of defeatism could be properly investigated, the corruption of Paul Bolo, the condemnation of Lenoir and Duval, and the prosecution of too many spies to leave any doubt that Paris was riddled by enemy agents working with impunity. With such an accumulation of villainies threatening the commonweal, could any guilty person who fell into the hands of outraged military justice have any reasonable hope of justice outside the letter of the law? Would any President have dared to inflame public spirit when it was clamouring to have its social structure purged of all Defeatist elements and all cosmopolitan parasites destroying the security of France, by exercising his prerogative of clemency in favour of a woman who had sent thousands of French soldiers to their deaths and who still remained proudly unrepentant if not actually proud of her infamy?

Yet with an infantile pride in themselves Mata

Hari and her advocate cherished hopes of intervention from the outside in spite of all. Public spirit in France was violently inflamed against Mata Hari, more so than against any other spy seized during the war, but the existence of an universal horror against her in no way affected her high hopes of release. The average Frenchman was firmly convinced that the spy had so earned the gratitude of her employers that they would not discard her, that some vigorous effort would be attempted to free her from the prison, and there was undoubtedly good grounds for this belief as the civil police became more and more anxious about the safety of their prisoner. This anxiety culminated on the morning of her execution, although the story, such as it is, was not known until after the event, and so fitted into the circumstances that to this day many people find ample evidence of the success of those audacious individuals who had accepted the task of liberating her.

The common supposition that the attempt at rescue would be made by some of the German secret agents proved wrong. The honour of having provided the most sensational story of her rescue is given to a man who has been called Pierre de Mortissac, the degenerate son of a noble house who dissipated a fortune in his own amusement and in an unsuccessful attempt to steal Mata Hari's love from her German lover. All that is known of de Mortissac is that he went through life in a series of romantic love-affairs involving the elopement of a Russian princess, the suicide of an Englishwoman of noble family, and with numerous less distinguished victims until he fell in love with Mata Hari. For years he is supposed to have spent his life in defending himself against the bitter jealousy of the German lover, who employed several desperadoes to interfere at every turn with the happiness of his rival. It is also said that this de Mortissac tried ineffectually to induce Mata Hari to give up her dangerous work. His biographer states that it was through this man that she left Spain to come to Paris, where his influence was to have been used to gain a pardon for her, but that the Second Bureau were too quick to act and all that was left for the faithful lover was a sensational attempt at rescue. The plot has not the merit of originality. It was borrowed wholesale from Sardou's melodrama, made famous in the opera, "Tosca." Here, it will be recalled, it was arranged that the bullets should be extracted from the firing-squad's rifles, so that the hero would then not only feign death, but would be rescued by the devotion of his lover. Something of the same thing was to be attempted in Mata Hari's case. Arrangements were made to deal with every situation as it arose on the fatal morning.

Not only had the officer in charge of the firing-squad been bribed to use blank cartridges, but the gendarmes responsible for pinioning Mata Hari's arms were also bribed to fasten the cords so lightly that her body could sink to the ground when the shots were fired. A French military execution is the occasion for much ceremony. There is a large parade of soldiers, whose duty it is to march past the dead traitor after the execution, and it was felt that if Mata Hari were fastened securely to the stake she could not successfully feign death before all those eyes. Therefore, she had to fall with her face averted. Then arrangements had to be made to make the coffin admit enough air to keep her reasonably comfortable after the ceremony and the grave had to be dug shallow enough to prevent so much earth being thrown on the coffin that the occupant would suffocate. All these details are important in view of what happened later. For the moment they are offered to explain why many people still find in Mata Hari's amazing composure the strong underlying conviction that all she had to do was to play a part as though the turf on the rifle-range at Vincennes was the stageboards of the familiar Olympia, and her death a childish deception.

As the days sped on Mata Hari had as sole comfort the daily visits of the young prison doctor, on whom she still practised her arts of fascination, and the equally regular visits of her old friend and advocate, always laden with delicacies, gossip, and perennial hope. On the eve of the day fixed for her execution the advocate failed to appear. He was absent, making his final but unsuccessful appeal to the President to remit the death penalty. This defection afflicted Mata Hari as a gloomy presentiment of evil, for the old man had assured her that he would certainly appear that day with the cheering news that his old and powerful friend had listened sympathetically to the tragic story of her sad, misguided, and misunderstood life. Her distress was apparent to the Sisters of Mercy who attended her. At first Mata Hari regarded these two nuns with marked hostility. The presence of the two simple souls, devoid of all vanity and show, was an offence to her more fastidious tastes in companions. She mocked them for their simplicity in that manner of all beautiful women who find an endless source of humour in poverty, physical ugliness, and honesty. For a long time the accused woman had refused to accept the trifling offer of comfort from the two Sisters, but slowly her resistance broke down before the unfailing good-nature and kind heart of the sparkling-eyed Sister Leonide.

Seeing her deep gloom on the day when Maître Clunet failed to bring his daily measure of cheerful gossip and hope, Sister Leonide, with a shrewd knowledge of the dancer's vanity, approached her with a singular suggestion:

"You have got to save yourself from this fit of black despair," she said. "Why don't you dance? You will forget all your art and, besides, you have never given us an exhibition of your talents."

And in the condemned cell, with no other audience than the two nuns, Mata Hari danced!

The action was sufficient to restore her equanimity. The despondency to which she had succumbed vanished like magic and she prattled gaily. If the advocate failed her there was still a mysterious power hovering over her destiny which supported her profound faith in herself.

The incidents in cell No. 12 on the fatal morning have been described so many times with fanciful additions that we will rely upon the evidence of the two eye-witnesses whose evidence most nearly corresponds. The actual moment for the execution had been fixed for 5.47 A.M. An hour before this time the officials charged with the execution collected at the prison to carry out their unpleasant task.

"She is asleep," said the warden when formal application was made for her surrender to the military authorities.

The officials were unexpectedly joined by one visitor from whose company they had wished to be spared. It was the venerable old man who had steadfastly fought for the spy's release, but who now brought a fresh weapon for the consternation of the already harassed officials. Reports and rumours of an attempt at rescue on the way to Vincennes worried them. The guards were strengthened to reduce the chance of any desperate action on the part of either the German agents or the mythical lover. Perhaps Maître Clunet could enlighten them upon the situation. Those charged with the execution of Mata Hari had a great sympathy for the respected old lawyer, whose conduct during the trying time had not caused any of them to forfeit their affection for him, but, knowing his profound attachment to the accused woman, they feared his deep emotions might lead to some scene of tragic despair if he witnessed the morbid details of her death.

"Maître Clunet, we have heard unpleasant reports," said the senior officer of the party. "Can you tell us whether you have heard any suggestion that an effort will be made to rescue Mata Hari this morning?"

"No, I have heard nothing, but ——"

"On your word of honour, you have heard nothing?"

"On my honour," declared the old man, emphatically. "I have not hesitated to use all the legal resources at my command, but I would have nothing to do with any illegal effort to release the prisoner. I still rely on the law. Gentlemen, Mata Hari cannot be executed this morning. I formally oppose any such action and invoke Article 27 of the Penal Code, Book 1, Chapter I."

Maître Clunet's announcement, supported by the quotation of a fearsome legal instrument, caused consternation. So this was the opening phase of the attempt to rescue Mata Hari at the last minute. These officers were soldiers and not lawyers who understood legal forms and authorities. A lawyer had to explain (imagine the scene of these astounded officials excitedly demanding proof at that early hour of the morning!) that the clause of the "Code" which was invoked provides that a woman expecting to give birth to a child might not be executed. The group of soldiers regarded the triumphant lawyer with looks of blank dismay. Justice, after so many delays, was foiled. The inexorable Second Bureau had been outwitted by the country's laws.

"It is impossible. No man has visited the accused in her cell," protested the prison warden, who was responsible under this grave accusation.

"Suppose it was I," cried the gallant old man, "I have visited her."

"What, at your age?" demanded Mornay, cross as the devil at being dragged from a warm bed so early in the day to answer crazy legal conundrums. "Why, you must be at least seventy-five!"

"No matter what my age is, I invoke Article 27 of the Penal Code and you cannot execute Mata Hari this morning."

Still uneasy in spite of Mornay's confident attitude, the tragic procession trudged down the corridor, lighted only by a flickering gas-jet, and echoing to the heavy tread of soldiers' feet. Behind the fatal door lay a human creature in peaceful slumber, dreaming of deliverance and false hopes of happiness deferred.

To awaken her abruptly from these cherished visions of liberty and love to the sight of the doorway filled with the figures of those who had come in the name of 50,000 dead to demand vengeance, was to expose her to merciless anguish. The pitiless betrayal of their comrades, the little nameless graves surmounted by a tattered *poilu's* cap, the cries of the wounded, the tears of the orphans were momentarily forgotten in the wish of those gallant French officers to spare their victim any unnecessary suffering. Everyone was asked to make as much noise as possible so that the prisoner might be awake at the time of their arrival at the door of her cell and might have had the opportunity to compose herself for their reception. Her visitors knew of her temperamental outbursts and feared a more than usually severe attack at this moment of crisis. But when the door was opened the two guardians were found to be sitting up in their beds, rubbing slumber from their eyes, while the prisoner was still sleeping peacefully. They had to shake her gently to inform her that the advocate's plea for a remission of sentence had been denied and that she was to die that morning.

"What? It is not possible, it cannot be possible," was all that she could say, believing in her heart that she was speaking the truth.

Then she was told that if she could prove what Maître Clunet had suggested, that she was an expectant mother, her life would be spared, but that she must subject herself to a medical examination.

Mata Hari burst into laughter. Recognizing her acquaintance, Dr. Bralez, she hastily wrapped a peignoir about her nakedness, for she was, as usual, insufficiently clad for these ceremonies, and, approaching him, whispered:

"Did you hear that? Old Maître Clunet says if I avail myself of Article something or other of an old Code which forbids the execution of a woman about to be a mother, I can be saved. Isn't he an excruciatingly funny old dear?"

She laughed readily and naturally at the absurdity of the advocate's suggestion to save her life, and then with a gesture, not devoid of dignity, she dismissed the idea and refused to be examined by the doctor, declaring that Maître Clunet was under a misapprehension inspired by his devotion to her interests, and that her health was excellent. She then asked that the visitors might withdraw so that she could complete dressing and prepare herself for the ceremony in which she was cast to play the principal rôle. As the men were retiring from the cell the condemned woman called to Dr. Bralez and asked to have his company, which she preferred to that of the more sedate nuns.

The officials then retired and began again to question Maître Clunet about this threatened attempt to rescue the prisoner, but he could shed no light on the matter and surrendered himself to the horribly inevitable. Inside the cell Mata Hari carried on a running commentary on the proceedings while completing her preparations.

"You saw how those gentlemen were afraid to find me in tears or to hear my sobs?" she said to Dr. Bralez, as she leisurely dressed as though she had no more serious business on hand that morning than a series of social visits. "You heard how they recommended me to be brave? If only they knew how well I have slept. . . . Any other day I would not have forgiven them for having awakened me at such an early hour.

"What is the object of executing prisoners at dawn? In India it is not so; they are more reasonable. There, death is a penalty that is made a ceremony to be celebrated in full daylight, before crowds of guests decorated with sweet-scented jasmine. I would much prefer to have gone to Vincennes in the middle of the afternoon after having had a good luncheon with some friends. All the same, I do not think they would want to have me shot with an empty stomach. What do you recommend?"

"A cordial," suggested the good Sister Leonide.

"A glass of rum," is the doctor's prescription, for by law the condemned is thoughtfully provided with this fortifying liquor and, if desired, a soothing cigarette.

"That's it, give me a glass of grog."

As the spy sipped the rum and sweetened water supplied her she enquired about the weather. She was told that it was a beautiful morning.

"In that case you must give me the beige cloak I was wearing when I came here," she said to the two nuns.

Mata Hari had now relinquished all hope of delivery from her execution except what might be possible through the agency of the mysterious lover who was exerting himself outside the prison walls. Her attitude of negligence and indifference perplexed everyone who did not know of some secret support. They wondered at the calm demeanour of this nervous artist who was accustomed to outbursts of violent anger if affairs did not march in accordance with her desires. They marvelled at the enigmatic smile by which she concealed her last deception. She played the part allotted to her nobly, to the admiration of all who beheld her confidence.

"Death?" she soliloquized. "Death is nothing, nor life, either, for that matter. To die, to sleep, to pass into nothingness, what does it matter? Everything is an illusion."

One of the nuns, shocked by this heresy, hoped to see the woman reconciled to the orthodox faith by reminding her that the prison chaplain and a Protestant minister were in attendance, and recommended that Mata Hari make her peace with God by seeing either one of them. While considering this suggestion Mata Hari carefully adjusted the combs in her hair before a small mirror, powdered her face and bust, and generally completed a careful toilette. If she was to feign death she could at least be a well-turned-out corpse. Observing that the nuns had clumsily knotted the laces of her dainty shoes, she mildly remonstrated.

"It is plain to see, Sister, that you do not have laces like these in your boots. But no matter, I will put them right, and you may call the Protestant minister. Although I have very little need of his ministry, he may come in."

The woman whose only religion had been the worship of sensuous pleasures and whose nearest approach to spirituality was a form of Buddhist pessimism, knelt before the minister and was baptized in the rites of Anabaptism. Then the officers entered the cell to claim their prisoner.

"Have you any declaration to make?" asked one of them.

Mata Hari turned upon him with amused contempt as she answered:

"None, and if I had it would not be to you that I should make it."

"Have you any wish to express?"

"Yes. I would like to see Captain Marov, but as he is in Russia I shall be content to write to him if you will give me permission."

In the prison director's office she calmly adjusted her hat before sitting down to write three letters, one to her young daughter full of wise motherly counsel to guide aright her life, one to the favoured French lover who had braved public condemnation to bear witness in her favour, and one to the absent Marov. These she handed to her lawyer with the strict injunction that he display care in putting them into envelopes, so that her lovers' letters might not go to her daughter; she wished no such embarrassing situation. This final privilege completed, Mata Hari submitted to the instructions of the officers. The party of guards and official witnesses got into waiting cars and proceeded without delay to the place of execution. On the way the prisoner chatted pleasantly with the two gendarmes who accompanied her, gently reproaching one for remaining a bachelor. They arrived at the rifle-range just as a chill dawn was lighting a grey sky and the whistle of a near-by factory summoned the early workers to resume their daily tasks.

Troops were drawn up in readiness, infantry in horizon blue, cavalry with their long black plumes drooping from brass helmets, and artillery in service dress, forming three sides of a hollow square. On the open side of this formation was the sinister tree, stripped of its leaves and branches. When her car arrived on the scene Mata Hari stepped daintily between some small pools left by the night rain. At the sight of the brave parade collected in her honour the prisoner whispered to the terrified little nun who accompanied her:

"Come, little Sister, hold tightly to my hand."

It was not because Mata Hari desired comforting assurance, but because she was protecting the trembling Sister, that she made this remark. The religious was feeling the poignancy of the impending tragedy much more than the principal actor. She was nervous at the presence of all this soldiery required to execute judgment upon one lone woman. Mata Hari was accustomed to military pomp. Her royal lover had made her familiar with its significance. Now, as the troops responded to the sharp command "Present arms!" they were saluting the Prince of All Things in whose presence Mata Hari was soon to answer for her deeds. Nevertheless, Mata Hari accepted the salute as homage to herself, and as she passed across the steadfast ranks she bowed gravely in acknowledgment. Slowly, with the majesty of a princess before her guard of honour, the Red Dancer permitted herself to be guided to the sinister tree. When she had gained her place in the centre of the parade she said to the attendant nun, who was still clinging nervously to the other's firm grip:

"Now it is over, you may release me."

The legal requirements were completed by the reading of the court-martial's sentence. The minister prayed until the officers began to stir nervously at the prolonged delay, the faithful nun knelt on the soft moist earth and added her prayers to that of the minister, begging a final mercy for this sister who had erred. Then the priest, having completed his ministrations stepped back, the gendarmes pressed the condemned woman against the tree trunk. When a bandage was produced to shut out from her sight the final preparations for her death, Mata Hari disdainfully waved it aside. She who had looked so boldly on life had no need to fear death, especially a death in which she was merely playing a part for the deception of some five thousand interested spectators, in order to carry out the instructions of a faithful lover whose unseen hands were arranging the details. Mata Hari knew that the officials had got wind of some plot for her rescue. They had examined Maître Clunet about mysterious reports they had received during the night, but if the old man had been able, faithfully, to deny knowledge of the existence of any scheme to release her, the officials were, nevertheless, uneasy. When the two gendarmes made a pretence of tying the prisoner to the tree they did not even bother to fasten the knot of the rope. A good deal of significance was later attached to this omission.

The three lines of troops were called to attention. From their ranks came a dozen soldiers at the double, halting at the word of command within ten paces of the condemned. Quickly the young officer in command of the party gave his orders:

"Take aim."

Slowly he raised his sword to give the signal which would produce the fatal volley. Mata Hari was playing her unrehearsed part admirably. She gaily kissed her hand to the minister, to the old advocate who was now a pitifully weak old man, weeping unrestrainedly. To the young officer standing with upraised sword she said in a sweet voice:

"Thank you, monsieur."

"Fire."

At the crack of the rifles there was a deadly hush which lasted until the doctors had certified death and there came a last word of command:

"Forward, march!"

Round the three sides of the square went those French soldiers who had been called to witness the vengeance on their dead comrades, marching with the blare of trumpets and the roll of drums, glancing, who knows with what sensations, sidewards at the heap of huddled skirts lying at the foot of a bare tree, where a woman's face lay smiling enigmatically at the overhanging canopy of heaven.

The little group of awestruck spectators, who were prevented from approaching too closely the motionless body with its disfigured face, were about to disperse when the officer in charge of the execution, glancing expectantly at the weeping lawyer, asked:

"Does anyone claim this body?"

There was no response.

Oh, ingratitude! The lovely amber-tinted body that had danced for the delight of so many was despised and rejected by all her numerous lovers when death had stilled its allurements.

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That night the Paris newspapers told the curious world that the spy H21 had paid the penalty of her crimes. In the morning when those whose morbid curiosity could hardly credit the truth visited the little cemetery, what was their chagrin to find that the shallow grave was empty! Instantly the report spread that Mata Hari had escaped the bullets of her executioners and had been carried off by the lover who had planned the escape. That is why one still meets on the boulevards of Paris certain devoted lovers of her memory who declare that she and Pierre de Mortissac have revived the corybantic orgies of the worship of Siva; whispers of marvellous and scandalous entertainment still interest the credulous.

What is the secret of the empty grave? A grisly tale. Before the execution, a medical college, with the gruesome hunger for human bodies upon which to conduct the surgical experiments from which suffering humanity benefits, asked the authorities to surrender this body of a criminal for dissection. In accordance with their usual practice, when there was no claimant, the authorities made this concession to science. On the night that Mata Hari was shot her body was disinterred and carried to the clinic, where the surgeons had ample proof that death was due to the bullets of the firing party.

And Pierre de Mortissac?

A myth! The story goes that he had not bargained for the administration of a *coup de grâce* which dissipated the hopes of success for his plan, and that he is now dragging out his life within the grey walls of a monastery on an isolated hill in Spain where there is no outlook but the heavens on which the thoughts of the inmates are piously turned. But all investigation has proved unable to fix upon any recognizable incident of his fantastic existence, and the prior and guest-master of the monastery have lost their benign attitude in answering questions relating to the presence in the monastery of Pierre de Mortissac.

The history is ended, only the legends prevail. All that is known to the world in general of the Red Dancer of the Hundred Veils or no veils at all has been told here in an attempt to separate the truth from the fables. It has not been attempted to follow the legend to its entire length, for that would be an endless task that is being increased by the band of zealots who maintain that Mata Hari was a true Brahma and that she still lives.

Between the mythical purple altar of the Kanda Swany where her life of romance began and the rifle-range at Vincennes where it ended there is the width of three continents. It required the talent of Mata Hari to bridge the gulf. Her origin was as she chose to make it; the end was none the less her own choice.

THE END